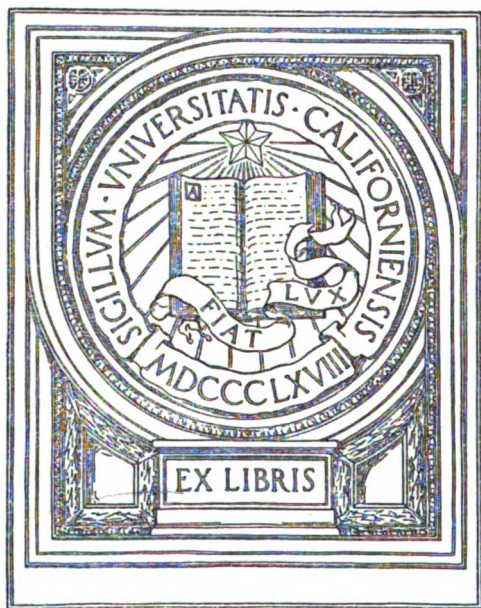


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ELIZABETH BARRETT
BROWNING'S
COMPLETE
WORKS



THE ARNO EDITION



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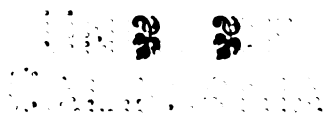
THE ARNO EDITION

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF
MRS. E. B. BROWNING

EDITED BY CHARLOTTE PORTER AND
HELEN A. CLARKE ♣ VOLUME VI. ♣ ♣



LAST POEMS
TRANSLATIONS
GREEK CHRISTIAN POETS
THE BOOK OF THE POETS
MISCELLANIES



NEW YORK .: GEORGE D.
SPROUL .: MDCCCCI

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CRITICAL INTRODUCTION.

THERE is no fresh development to be noted in the last group of poems collected in this volume. It represents the work of a poet with her tools fully in command, and with an inspiration capable as ever of flaming into splendor when she is dealing with her favorite theme of Italian liberty, or fashioning some mystical fancy, as in "A Musical Instrument," or mirroring the mood of suffering humanity caught in the cruel net of a "divine despair," as in "Mother and Poet."

The first two or three poems, as well as a few of the others, fall below the level of the poet's later work. One has a sort of shock on reading "Little Mattie" — it is too suggestive of the ordinary newspaper obituary. Equally commonplace in sentiment is "The False Step," though it has a fraction more genuine feeling. In "Void in Law" the note of feeling struck is so false that no sympathy is called out for the speaker in the poem, and the artistic treatment is not skilful enough to lift it to a plane where it would make its appeal as a dramatic sketch. This woman need only be compared with her own Marian, in "Aurora Leigh," to show how immeasurably inferior she is.

But it is far more pleasant to leave the failures to "blush unseen" and turn our attention to the flowers

whose sweetness must not be allowed to waste itself upon the desert air. The next poem, "Lord Walter's Wife," claims attention, not alone upon its own account, but because of its possessing the unique distinction of having been refused by Thackeray, to whom Mrs. Browning had sent it for the *Cornhill Magazine*. Thackeray's state of mind when he wrote the letter refusing it was not an enviable one, divided as it was between a desire not to offend Mrs. Browning, and a fear lest his readers might be shocked at the subject matter of the poem. He assures her he thinks the moral of the poem beyond reproach, and even falls into the untactful pass, in his desire to conciliate her, of declaring he knows she is one of the best of wives and mothers, and that he respects her as Browning's wife and Penini's mother. In those days literature dealt more exclusively than it does to-day with the starched and ironed side of life, except on Sunday, as Thackeray says, when it was permissible to mention the fact of sin, from the pulpit presumably. Mrs. Browning's usual independence of spirit comes out in her reply, perfectly good-natured, but implying criticism of Thackeray's standpoint. She pertinently asks if it is not the higher mood which on Sunday bears with the plainer word, and declares herself deeply convinced that the corruption of our society requires not shut doors and windows, but light and air ; and that it is exactly because pure and prosperous women choose to ignore vice, that miserable women suffer wrong by it everywhere.

In the poem, Lord Walter's wife reads the man who fears her because she is "far too fair" a severe lesson, though perhaps she might have found a better way of doing it than acting a questionable part in order to

show the man to himself. It is a lively little poem, however, with the same sort of human atmosphere as her other romance poem, "Lady Geraldine's Courtship."

Another poem with an especial interest attaching to it is "De Profundis," which does not belong to this period of the poet's life, but to a time nearly twenty years back. It was written after her brother Edward's death by drowning, as she herself explains, in her first rebound from her terrible grief at that event. As it was not published until 1860, its appearance coincided with the death of the poet's sister Henrietta, and it was in consequence supposed to refer to her, a mistake that evidently caused Mrs. Browning some annoyance, for she speaks of it in one of her letters to Isa Blagden. She tells Isa significantly that it was written before she knew Robert, and further that it would be an exaggeration of her present feeling.

It is very evident from her letters that she felt the death of her sister intensely as such a sensitive soul always feels sorrow, but the utter despair reflected in "De Profundis" would not be possible to a life that still had "Robert" in it.

As she herself also points out, it is in her "early manner," one of the distinguishing characteristics of which was the refrain she was fond of carrying through her poems. In this instance it has a powerful effect in impressing upon the reader the inexorable persistence of the ordinary occurrences of life, all things going on in the unbroken tenor of their way, regardless of the personal grief or despair which has changed the face of the universe. But the poet gets a still more subtle effect by means of the refrain, for through this very inexorableness of time, the mood changes from one of

despair to one of resignation and peace in the thought of the unchangeableness of the Infinite.

This poem has sometimes been classed with "The Sonnets from the Portuguese" as an expression of deep personal feeling, but tender and beautiful as it is, it has not the fervor and passion that mark the later poems, partly because of the subject — a mood of ecstasy, giving a wider play to the emotions than a mood of grief — and partly because the form being more artificial the feeling does not break forth with the same spontaneity.

— In "A Musical Instrument" we have Mrs. Browning in one of her strong, intensive moods. The thought is struck out red hot. There is not a word too much nor a word too little, and the great god Pan is before us in very deed, making his musical instrument as the myth relates; but inside the myth is the still more living idea of which the myth is but the shell. Pan, the great *All*, the Universe, is making a poet, the chief musical instrument of all time. He ruthlessly severs a man from his unconscious place in nature, so curtailing his natural joy; then draws his very heart out of him, for thus only shall he become able to give forth in his music the joy and sweetness of the whole universe. —

Professor Corson in a little article on this poem, entitled "The Cost of a Poet," in *Poet-lore*, 1895, gives an interpretation of it, stanza by stanza, very similar to the above. Of the second stanza he says that "the lilies represent the feebler, more delicate poetic natures that have not plastic or poetic power; the dragon-fly represents the stronger poetic nature, but also without poetic power. Both are unable to 'support the intolerable strain and stress of the universal.'" But when Pan's sweet music is heard

on the river the effect is magical, as we see in the fourth stanza, which Professor Corson points out as symbolizing the undying power of the light of poesy. "The lilies revived, the feebler poetic souls are nourished and sustained by the music of the great artist souls, souls that not only receive, but give forth, the secrets of the world; the dragon-fly attains to an inferior form of energizing, and comes back to *dream* on the river."

Possibly this is carrying the symbolizing too much into the minor details of the poem, but even if the poet intended to work up her symbolism with such exactness the artistic harmony of the poem is not marred, for, as Professor Corson himself admits, "it would be unjust to this little composition to regard it as an allegory, or as a product of the fancy, and not of the creative imagination. It is a true *poem*, producing a genuine poetic effect."

The Italian struggle for independence, already so brilliantly celebrated in "Casa Guidi Windows" and "Poems before Congress," is the inspiration for several poems in this volume, some giving immortal life to stirring incidents of the political history of the time, and others giving the reverse side of war — the side which shows the anguish of women and the suffering of the unnamed heroes. "First News from Villafranca" puts into burning verse one of those moments so terrible to a soul loving a great cause, when it seemed as if the impossibly base had happened. After a series of victories, a peace which was a pitiful compromise for the victors had been signed. Later critics have given palliative reasons for Napoleon's action at this time (see notes, "A Tale of Villafranca," Vol. III., page 428), but to the fiery spirit

of the poet only the vision of disappointed Italy was possible.

The story of one of the unknown heroes whose bravery and loyalty light up the rank and file of war is told strikingly in "The Forced Recruit;" and in "Mother and Poet" the terrible personal grief, the heritage perforce of many through the terrors of war, haunts one with its infinite pathos.

Disregarding the few weak notes that appear in the volume, these last poems form a fitting close to a mass of poetry of which the distinguishing characteristics are, as we have seen by the way, loftiness of aim, spontaneously imaginative diction, and the skill to depict a wide range in feeling, from the vigorously powerful moods of the Italian poems illuminated with the fervor of a great idea to the richly sensitive moods of the "Sonnets from the Portuguese," glowing with a great passion. While her genius is peculiarly lyrical, she at times shows a dramatic power, capable, we believe, — granted a wider range of life experience than she was able to command, — of development to a point such that she might have added to her psychical dramas others purely human and objective, thereby increasing our delight and her own fame.

Everywhere in her work one feels the pervading sense of a fine personality — of one who has reverently dedicated her powers to the revealment through art of all that is highest and best in life. With her eyes ever fixed upon the stars she is withal exquisitely human.

The spontaneity of her language leads to what some critics decry as her turgidity. But even if, at times, the flow of her thoughts breaks forth with white heat in expression bizarre or strange or obscure through

very impetuosity, it has its compensations in the sense of force thereby gained — as if a mountain brook fed by ceaseless showers in its rebellious rush to the sea carried some of the stones in its bed along with it, making it less limpid, it is true, but adding to the effect of its irresistibleness.

Her original manner of rhyming — so original at times that the uninitiated find it hard to recognize her rhymes at all — caused even her best friends much consternation. What she thought about them herself is the best defence of them. When her good friend Horne doubted whether her rhymes were really meant for rhymes at all, she informs him in a letter that he has “the naïveté of a right savage nature — of an Indian playing with a tomahawk and speculating as to whether the white faces had any feeling in their skulls *quand même* ! Know, then, that my rhymes *are* really meant for rhymes — and that I take them to be actual rhymes — as good rhymes as any used by rhymers, and that in no spirit of carelessness or easy writing, or desire to escape difficulties, have I run into them, — but chosen them, selected them, on principle, and with the determinate purpose of doing my best, in and out of this poem, to have them received ! What you say of a ‘poet’s duty,’ no one in the world can feel more deeply, in the verity of it, than myself. If I fail ultimately before the public — that is, before the people — for an ephemeral popularity does not appear to me worth trying for — it will not be because I have shrunk from the amount of labor — where labor could do any thing. I have *worked* at poetry — it has not been with me revery, but art. As the physician and lawyer work at their several professions, so have I, and so do I, apply to mine. And this I say, only to put

by any charge of carelessness which may rise up to the verge of your lips or thoughts.

“ With reference to the double rhyming, it has appeared to me employed with far less variety in our *serious* poetry than our language would admit of generally, — and that the various employment of it would add another string to the lyre of our Terpander. It has appeared to me that the single rhymes, as usually employed, are scarcely as various as they might be, but that of the double rhymes the observation is still truer. A great deal of attention — far more than it would take to rhyme with conventional accuracy — have I given to the subject of rhymes, and have determined in cold blood to hazard some experiments. At the same time, I should tell you, that scarcely one of the ‘ Pan ’ rhymes might not separately be justified *by the analogy of received rhymes*, although they have not themselves been received. Perhaps (also) there is not so irregular a rhyme throughout the poem of ‘ Pan ’ as the ‘ fellow ’ and ‘ prunella ’ of Pope the infallible.

“ I maintain that my ‘ islands ’ and ‘ silence ’ is a regular rhyme in comparison. Tennyson’s ‘ tendons ’ and ‘ attendance ’ is more objectionable to my mind than either. You, who are a reader of Spanish poetry, must be aware how soon the ear may be satisfied even by a recurring vowel. I mean to try it. At any rate, there are so few regular double rhymes in the English language that we must either admit some such trial or eschew the double rhymes generally ; and I, for one, am very fond of them, and believe them to have a power not yet drawn out to its length and capable development, in our lyrical poetry especially.

“ And now, upon all this — to prove to you that

I do not set out on this question with a minority of one — I take the courage and vanity to send to you a note which a poet whom we both admire wrote to a friend of mine who lent him the MS. of this very ‘Pan.’ Mark! — no opinion was asked about the rhymes, — the satisfaction was altogether impulsive — from within.”

This friend was Robert Browning, whose own masterful ear for rhyming makes his judgment worth while.

As time goes on, however, her eccentricities in rhyming become less frequent and it would be hard for the most fastidious to find a flaw in the rhymes of the “Sonnets from the Portuguese” or “Casa Guidi Windows.”

Mrs. Browning is, like her husband, an absolutely unique manifestation of genius. Her individuality is so strongly marked that she takes her place without question — not as “the best poet England has produced of her sex,” but as one of the great poets of the Victorian era, her work standing comparison with the most original among the men of the age, and having at its highest a quality of *daemon*ic inspiration which perhaps only Shelley approaches, and no one surpasses, unless we hark back to Shakespeare, whose daughter the appreciative among her critics call her.

Of the translations collected in this volume, many have more the character of paraphrases than exact translations, but with few exceptions they are distinguished by the magnetic touch of the poet.

The most important one, however, the “Prometheus Bound,” is regarded by many as one of the great masterpieces of translation, fine as English poetry, yet sufficiently reflecting the spirit of the original, even

if its splendor is somewhat intensified by the poet's own ardor, as is apt to be the case when one great poet translates another.

Her first version of it was brought out in 1833, having been written in twelve days, as she afterwards explained to Mr. Horne. She became so much dissatisfied with this version of her 'prentice hand that she tried again, with the success we have noted. She hoped the first version would sink into oblivion, but according to the law that a man's sins will find him out, it has recently been raked out from the fire into which Mrs. Browning mentally threw it, but where it was not consumed, and has been reprinted.

In turning from Mrs. Browning's poetry to her prose, the experience is only one of added pleasure. She has written a delightful essay upon the somewhat dull subject of the "Greek Christian Poets." Her wit flutters about their stupidities and long-windedness like an Ariel's around some pious Trinculo, until she leads one finally out into the open of their good qualities. She rises to quite a glow of enthusiasm for some of these fathers, though most readers will probably prefer seeing them even at their best through the medium of her appreciation than by any directer view.

"The Book of the Poets" is ostensibly a review of a volume of selections from the British poets, but resolves itself into a critical essay upon the English poets, big and little, from Chaucer to Wordsworth.

Working here on ground familiar to the English reader, one is able to judge better of her power as a critic. There can be no hesitation in the decision. Her conclusions are so penetrating and so nicely balanced that they seem to possess a sort of eternal justice. Nor are they dry, intellectual judgments, but are hu-

manized by feeling, and livened by her quick fancy. Altogether it would be hard to find more fascinating prose, combining as it does ease and grace in style, with justness of thought.

The same qualities appear in the remaining prose fragments included in this volume. They have been, as it were, disentangled from work done in collaboration with Mr. Horne in his ambitious work, "The New Spirit of the Age," wherein contemporary poets and writers were gravely assigned their respective niches. Miss Barrett was conspicuous among those whom he asked to help him, and sent her opinions to him in voluminous letters, which he afterwards worked up into his essays. Happily the typewriter had not then come into being, so Miss Barrett's letters were pasted bodily in with his own copy, and can be extricated on account of the handwriting. Thus has been saved to posterity in these prose bits a shining example of the genuine appreciation one genius may feel for others of the same place and time. The larger part of these were first printed by Mr. Wm. G. Kingsland in *Poet-lore*, and they have since appeared in "Literary Anecdotes of the Nineteenth Century," by Messrs. Nichols and Wise.

Mr. Horne's account of the projected "Psyche Apocalyphté" explains itself. The account was first printed in February, 1876, in the *St. James Magazine* and *United Empire Review*, and was reprinted the same year for private circulation.

Mr. Kenyon in his edition of Mrs. Browning's Letters remarks that fortunately the project was abandoned, as the conception was allegorical, philosophical, unusual, fantastic. It is just these qualities that appeal to us and make us regret its abandonment, for

might we not have had moulded out of this allegory, philosophy, and fantasy, through the deft manipulation of our poet, a phantasmagoria as fascinating, mayhap, as the second part of *Faust*?

"Italy and America," the last of the three concluding pieces of this volume, here rescued from mid-century periodical files, belongs to the final year of the poet's life. It expresses in her usual direct and spirited prose the democratic enthusiasm and the keen political discernment characteristic of her later life and work. Much the same sort of penetration mixed with social ardor belongs to it as to the word she let drop once in a private letter of 1855, a word deserving permanent record. What she expected of the future, she said, and looked out for, in much quiet hope, was "a great development of Christianity in opposition to the churches, and of humanity generally in opposition to the nations."

The reappearance of the bit of opinion on "Italy and America" for the first time now in an American edition of her complete works may be deemed especially interesting, not merely because it was contributed casually to the American newspaper wherein so many of her last poems were originally published, — the little scrap, pointed as it is, being made up only of extracts from a letter accompanying the MS. of her poems across the Atlantic, — but also because it shows how lively her sympathy was with this country, how ready to link the America of the antislavery darkness with her Italy of the unification struggle, how prompt to feel the right principle of liberty for future growth underlying the difficulties of a crucial period for both countries.

The two preceding pieces — the prose and the

translations — are more finished but less fruitful despite the more premeditation. They belong to her early life and manner, and to turn from them to the last piece, slight and disconnected as it is, is to see with one glance how wide the way the life of the poet has travelled.

CHARLOTTE PORTER.
HELEN A. CLARKE.

LAST POEMS.

1862.

TO "GRATEFUL FLORENCE,"
TO THE MUNICIPALITY, HER REPRESENTATIVE,
AND TO TOMMASEO, ITS SPOKESMAN,
MOST GRATEFULLY.

LAST POEMS.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THESE Poems are given as they occur on a list drawn up last June. A few had already been printed in periodicals.

There is hardly such direct warrant for publishing the Translations ; which were only intended, many years ago, to accompany and explain certain Engravings after ancient Gems, in the projected work of a friend, by whose kindness they are now recovered : but as two of the original series (the " Adonis " of Bion, and " Song to the Rose " from Achilles Tatius) have subsequently appeared, it is presumed that the remainder may not improperly follow.

A single recent version is added.

LONDON: *February*, 1862.

LITTLE MATTIE.

I.

DEAD ! Thirteen a month ago !
Short and narrow her life's walk ;
Lover's love she could not know
Even by a dream or talk :

To young to be glad of youth,
 Missing honour, labour, rest,
 And the warmth of a babe's mouth
 At the blossom of her breast.
 Must you pity her for this
 And for all the loss it is,
 You, her mother, with wet face,
 Having had all in your case ?

10

II.

Just so young but yesternight,
 Now she is as old as death.
 Meek, obedient in your sight,
 Gentle to a beck or breath
 Only on last Monday ! Yours,
 Answering you like silver bells
 Lightly touched ! An hour matures :
 You can teach her nothing else.
 She has seen the mystery hid
 Under Egypt's pyramid :
 By those eyelids pale and close
 Now she knows what Rhamses knows.

20

III.

Cross her quiet hands, and smooth
 Down her patient locks of silk,
 Cold and passive as in truth
 You your fingers in spilt milk
 Drew along a marble floor ;
 But her lips you cannot wring
 Into saying a word more,
 " Yes," or " No," or such a thing :

30

Though you call and beg and wreak
 Half your soul out in a shriek,
 She will lie there in default
 And most innocent revolt.

IV.

Ay, and if she spoke, maybe
 She would answer, like the Son,
 "What is now 'twixt thee and me?"
 Dreadful answer! better none. 40
 Yours on Monday, God's to-day!
 Yours, your child, your blood, your heart,
 Called . . . you called her, did you say,
 "Little Mattie" for your part?
 Now already it sounds strange,
 And you wonder, in this change,
 What He calls His angel-creature,
 Higher up than you can reach her.

V.

'Twas a green and easy world
 As she took it; room to play 50
 (Though one's hair might get uncurled
 At the far end of the day).
 What she suffered she shook off
 In the sunshine; what she sinned
 She could pray on high enough
 To keep safe above the wind.
 If reproved by God or you,
 'Twas to better her, she knew;
 And if crossed, she gathered still
 'Twas to cross out something ill. 60

VI.

You, you had the right, you thought,
 To survey her with sweet scorn,
 Poor gay child, who had not caught
 Yet the octave-stretch forlorn
 Of your larger wisdom ! Nay,
 Now your places are changed so,
 In that same superior way
 She regards you dull and low
 As you did herself exempt
 From life's sorrows. Grand contempt 70
 Of the spirits risen awhile,
 Who look back with such a smile !

VII.

There's the sting of't. That, I think,
 Hurts the most a thousandfold !
 To feel sudden, at a wink,
 Some dear child we used to scold,
 Praise, love both ways, kiss and tease,
 Teach and tumble as our own,
 All its curls about our knees,
 Rise up suddenly full-grown. 80
 Who could wonder such a sight
 Made a woman mad outright ?
 Show me Michael with the sword
 Rather than such angels, Lord !

A FALSE STEP.

5

A FALSE STEP.

I.

SWEET, thou hast trod on a heart.
Pass ; there's a world full of men ;
And women as fair as thou art
Must do such things now and then.

II.

Thou only hast stepped unaware, —
Malice, not one can impute ;
And why should a heart have been there
In the way of a fair woman's foot ?

III.

It was not a stone that could trip,
Nor was it a thorn that could rend : 10
Put up thy proud under-lip !
'Twas merely the heart of a friend.

IV.

And yet peradventure one day
Thou, sitting alone at the glass,
Remarking the bloom gone away,
Where the smile in its dimplement was,

V.

And seeking around thee in vain
From hundreds who flattered before,
Such a word as " Oh, not in the main 19
Do I hold thee less precious, but more ! " . . .

VI.

Thou'lt sigh, very like, on thy part,
 "Of all I have known or can know,
 I wish I had only that Heart
 I trod upon ages ago !"

VOID IN LAW.

I.

SLEEP, little babe, on my knee,
 Sleep, for the midnight is chill,
 And the moon has died out in the tree,
 And the great human world goeth ill.
 Sleep, for the wicked agree :
 Sleep, let them do as they will.
 Sleep.

II.

Sleep, thou hast drawn from my breast
 The last drop of milk that was good ;
 And now, in a dream, suck the rest,
 Lest the real should trouble thy blood.
 Suck, little lips dispossessed,
 As we kiss in the air whom we would.
 Sleep.

10

III.

O lips of thy father ! the same,
 So like ! Very deeply they swore
 When he gave me his ring and his name,
 To take back, I imagined, no more !

And now is all changed like a game,
 Though the old cards are used as of yore ? 20
 Sleep.

IV.

“Void in law,” said the Courts. Something
 wrong
 In the forms ? Yet, “Till death part us two,
 I, James, take thee, Jessie,” was strong,
 And ONE witness competent. True
 Such a marriage was worth an old song,
 Heard in Heaven though, as plain as the New.
 Sleep.

V.

Sleep, little child, his and mine !
 Her throat has the antelope curve, 30
 And her cheek just the colour and line
 Which fade not before him nor swerve :
 Yet *she* has no child ! — the divine
 Seal of right upon loves that deserve.
 Sleep.

VI.

My child ! though the world take her part,
 Saying “She was the woman to choose ;
 He had eyes, was a man in his heart,” —
 We twain the decision refuse :
 We . . . weak as I am, as thou art, . . . 40
 Cling on to him, never to loose.
 Sleep.

VII.

He thinks that, when done with this place,
 All's ended ? he'll new-stamp the ore ?
 Yes, Cæsar's — but not in our case.
 Let him learn we are waiting before
 The grave's mouth, the heaven's gate, God's
 face,
 With implacable love evermore.
 Sleep.

VIII.

He's ours, though he kissed her but now, 50
 He's ours, though she kissed in reply :
 He's ours, though himself disavow,
 And God's universe favour the lie ;
 Ours to claim, ours to clasp, ours below,
 Ours above, . . . if we live, if we die.
 Sleep.

IX.

Ah baby, my baby, too rough
 Is my lullaby ? What have I said ?
 Sleep ! When I've wept long enough
 I shall learn to weep softly instead, 60
 And piece with some alien stuff
 My heart to lie smooth for thy head.
 Sleep.

X.

Two souls met upon thee, my sweet ;
 Two loves led thee out to the sun :
 Alas, pretty hands, pretty feet,
 If the one who remains (only one)

Set her grief at thee, turned in a heat
To thine enemy, — were it well done ?
Sleep.

70

XI.

May He of the manger stand near
And love thee ! An infant He came
To His own who rejected Him here,
But the Magi brought gifts all the same.
I hurry the cross on my Dear !
My gifts are the griefs I declaim !
Sleep.

LORD WALTER'S WIFE.

I.

“But why do you go ?” said the lady, while both
sat under the yew,
And her eyes were alive in their depth, as the kraken
beneath the sea-blue.

II.

“Because I fear you,” he answered ; — “because
you are far too fair,
And able to strangle my soul in a mesh of your gold-
coloured hair.”

III.

“Oh, that,” she said, “is no reason ! Such knots
are quickly undone,
And too much beauty, I reckon, is nothing but too
much sun.”

IV.

“Yet farewell so,” he answered ; — “the sunstroke’s
fatal at times.
I value your husband, Lord Walter, whose gallop rings
still from the limes.”

V.

“Oh, that,” she said, “is no reason. You smell a
rose through a fence :
If two should smell it, what matter ? who grumbles,
and where’s the pretence ?” 10

VI.

“But I,” he replied, “have promised another, when
love was free,
To love her alone, alone, who alone and afar loves
me.”

VII.

“Why, that,” she said, “is no reason. Love’s
always free, I am told.
Will you vow to be safe from the headache on Tues-
day, and think it will hold ?”

VIII.

“But you,” he replied, “have a daughter, a young
little child, who was laid
In your lap to be pure ; so I leave you : the angels
would make me afraid.”

IX.

“ Oh, that,” she said, “ is no reason. The angels
keep out of the way ;
And Dora, the child, observes nothing, although you
should please me and stay.”

X.

At which he rose up in his anger, — “ Why, now,
you no longer are fair !
Why, now, you no longer are fatal, but ugly and
hateful, I swear.” 20

XI.

At which she laughed out in her scorn : “ These men !
Oh, these men overnice,
Who are shocked if a colour not virtuous is frankly put
on by a vice.”

XII.

Her eyes blazed upon him — “ And *you* ! You bring
us your vices so near
That we smell them ! You think in our presence a
thought 'twould defame us to hear !

XIII.

“ What reason had you, and what right, — I appeal
to your soul from my life, —
To find me too fair as a woman ? Why, sir, I am
pure, and a wife.

xiv.

“Is the day-star too fair up above you ? It burns you
not. Dare you imply
I brushed you more close than the star does, when
Walter had set me as high ?

xv.

“If a man finds a woman too fair, he means simply
adapted too much
To use unlawful and fatal. The praise ! — shall I
thank you for such ? 30

xvi.

“Too fair ? — not unless you misuse us ! and surely
if, once in a while,
You attain to it, straightway you call us no longer too
fair, but too vile.

xvii.

“A moment, — I pray your attention ! — I have a
poor word in my head
I must utter, though womanly custom would set it
down better unsaid.

xviii.

“You grew, sir, pale to impertinence, once when I
showed you a ring.
You kissed my fan when I dropped it. No matter !
— I’ve broken the thing.

xix.

“You did me the honour, perhaps, to be moved at
my side now and then
In the senses — a vice, I have heard, which is common
to beasts and some men.

xx.

“Love’s a virtue for heroes ! — as white as the snow
on high hills,
And immortal as every great soul is that struggles,
endures, and fulfils. 40

xxi.

“I love my Walter profoundly, — you, Maude, though
you faltered a week,
For the sake of . . . what was it — an eyebrow ?
or, less still, a mole on a cheek ?

xxii.

“And since, when all’s said, you’re too noble to
stoop to the frivolous cant
About crimes irresistible, virtues that swindle, betray
and supplant,

xxiii.

“I determined to prove to yourself that, whate’er you
might dream or avow
By illusion, you wanted precisely no more of me than
you have now.

xxiv.

“There! Look me full in the face! — in the face.
Understand, if you can,
That the eyes of such women as I am are clean as the
palm of a man.

xxv.

“Drop his hand, you insult him. Avoid us for fear
we should cost you a scar —
You take us for harlots, I tell you, and not for the
women we are. 50

xxvi.

“You wronged me : but then I considered . . .
there’s Walter ! And so at the end
I vowed that he should not be mulcted, by me, in the
hand of a friend.

xxvii.

“Have I hurt you indeed ? We are quits then. Nay,
friend of my Walter, be mine !
Come, Dora, my darling, my angel, and help me to
ask him to dine.”

BIANCA AMONG THE NIGHTINGALES.

I.

THE cypress stood up like a church
That night we felt our love would hold,
And saintly moonlight seemed to search
And wash the whole world clean as gold ;

BIANCA AMONG THE NIGHTINGALES. 15

The olives crystallised the vales'
Broad slopes until the hills grew strong :
The fire-flies and the nightingales
Throbbled each to either, flame and song.
The nightingales, the nightingales !

II.

Upon the angle of its shade 10
The cypress stood, self-balanced high ;
Half up, half down, as double-made,
Along the ground, against the sky ;
And *we*, too ! from such soul-height went
Such leaps of blood, so blindly driven,
We scarce knew if our nature meant
Most passionate earth or intense heaven,
The nightingales, the nightingales !

III.

We paled with love, we shook with love,
We kissed so close we could not vow ; 20
Till Giulio whispered " Sweet, above
God's Ever guaranties this Now."'
And through his words the nightingales
Drove straight and full their long clear call,
Like arrows through heroic mails,
And love was awful in it all.
The nightingales, the nightingales !

IV.

O cold white moonlight of the north,
Refresh these pulses, quench this hell !
O coverture of death drawn forth 30
Across this garden-chamber . . . well !

But what have nightingales to do
 In gloomy England, called the free . . .
 (Yes, free to die in ! . . .) when we two
 Are sundered, singing still to me ?
 And still they sing, the nightingales !

v.

I think I hear him, how he cried
 " My own soul's life ! " between their notes.
 Each man has but one soul supplied, 39
 And that's immortal. Though his throat's
 On fire with passion now, to *her*
 He can't say what to me he said !
 And yet he moves her, they aver.
 The nightingales sing through my head, —
 The nightingales, the nightingales !

vi.

He says to her what moves her most.
 He would not name his soul within
 Her hearing, — rather pays her cost
 With praises to her lips and chin.
 Man has but one soul, 'tis ordained, 50
 And each soul but one love, I add ;
 Yet souls are damned and love's profaned ;
 These nightingales will sing me mad !
 The nightingales, the nightingales !

vii.

I marvel how the birds can sing.
 There's little difference, in their view,
 Betwixt our Tuscan trees that spring
 As vital flames into the blue,

BIANCA AMONG THE NIGHTINGALES. 17

And dull round blots of foliage meant,
Like saturated sponges here 60
To suck the fogs up. As content
Is he too in this land, 'tis clear.
And still they sing, the nightingales.

VIII.

My native Florence ! dear, forgone !
I see across the Alpine ridge
How the last feast-day of Saint John
Shot rockets from Carraia bridge.
The luminous city, tall with fire,
Trode deep down in that river of ours,
While many a boat with lamp and choir 70
Skimmed birdlike over glittering towers.
I will not hear these nightingales.

IX.

I seem to float, *we* seem to float
Down Arno's stream in festive guise ;
A boat strikes flame into our boat,
And up that lady seems to rise
As then she rose. The shock had flashed
A vision on us ! What a head,
What leaping eyeballs ! — beauty dashed
To splendour by a sudden dread. 80
And still they sing, the nightingales.

X.

Too bold to sin, too weak to die ;
Such women are so. As for me,
I would we had drowned there, he and I,
That moment, loving perfectly.

He had not caught her with her loosed
 Gold ringlets . . . rarer in the south . . .
 Nor heard the "Grazie tanto" bruised
 To sweetness by her English mouth.
 And still they sing, the nightingales. 90

XI.

She had not reached him at my heart
 With her fine tongue, as snakes indeed
 Kill flies ; nor had I, for my part,
 Yearned after, in my desperate need,
 And followed him as he did her
 To coasts left bitter by the tide,
 Whose very nightingales, elsewhere
 Delighting, torture and deride !
 For still they sing, the nightingales.

XII.

A worthless woman ; mere cold clay 100
 As all false things are : but so fair,
 She takes the breath of men away
 Who gaze upon her unaware.
 I would not play her larcenous tricks
 To have her looks ! She lied and stole,
 And spat into my love's pure pyx
 The rank saliva of her soul.
 And still they sing, the nightingales.

XIII.

I would not for her white and pink,
 Though such he likes — her grace of limb, 110
 Though such he has praised — nor yet, I think,
 For life itself, though spent with him,

Commit such sacrilege, affront
 God's nature which is love, intrude
 'Twixt two affianced souls, and hunt
 Like spiders, in the altar's wood.
 I cannot bear these nightingales.

XIV.

If she chose sin, some gentler guise
 She might have sinned in, so it seems :
 She might have pricked out both my eyes, 120
 And I still seen him in my dreams !
 — Or drugged me in my soup or wine,
 Nor left me angry afterward :
 To die here with his hand in mine,
 His breath upon me, were not hard.
 (Our Lady hush these nightingales !)

XV.

But set a springe for *bim*, “*mio ben*,”
 My only good, my first last love ! —
 Though Christ knows well what sin is, when
 He sees some things done they must move
 Himself to wonder. Let her pass. 131
 I think of her by night and day.
 Must *I* too join her . . . out, alas ! . . .
 With Giulio, in each word I say ?
 And evermore the nightingales !

XVI.

Giulio, my Giulio ! — sing they so,
 And you be silent ? Do I speak,
 And you not hear ? An arm you throw
 Round some one, and I feel so weak ? 139

— Oh, owl-like birds ! They sing for spite,
 They sing for hate, they sing for doom,
 They'll sing through death who sing through
 night,
 They'll sing and stun me in the tomb —
 The nightingales, the nightingales !

MY KATE.

I.

SHE was not as pretty as women I know,
 And yet all your best made of sunshine and snow
 Drop to shade, melt to naught in the long trodden
 ways,
 While she's still remembered on warm and cold
 days —

My Kate.

II.

Her air had a meaning, her movements a grace ;
 You turned from the fairest to gaze on her face :
 And when you had once seen her forehead and mouth,
 You saw as distinctly her soul and her truth —

My Kate. 10

III.

Such a blue inner light from her eyelids outbroke,
 You looked at her silence and fancied she spoke :
 When she did, so peculiar yet soft was the tone,
 Though the loudest spoke also, you heard her alone —

My Kate.

IV.

I doubt if she said to you much that could act
 As a thought or suggestion : she did not attract
 In the sense of the brilliant or wise : I infer
 'Twas her thinking of others made you think of her —
 My Kate. 20

V.

She never found fault with you, never implied
 Your wrong by her right ; and yet men at her side
 Grew nobler, girls purer, as through the whole town
 The children were gladder that pulled at her gown —
 My Kate.

VI.

None knelt at her feet confessed lovers in thrall ;
 They knelt more to God than they used, — that was
 all :
 If you praised her as charming, some asked what you
 meant,
 But the charm of her presence was felt when she went —
 My Kate. 30

VII.

The weak and the gentle, the ribald and rude,
 She took as she found them, and did them all good ;
 It always was so with her — see what you have !
 She has made the grass greener even here . . . with
 her grave —

My Kate.

VIII.

My dear one ! — when thou wast alive with the rest,
 I held thee the sweetest and loved thee the best :
 And now thou art dead, shall I not take thy part
 As thy smiles used to do for thyself, my sweet Heart —
 My Kate ? 40

A SONG FOR THE RAGGED SCHOOLS OF LONDON.

WRITTEN IN ROME.

I.

I AM listening here in Rome.
 "England's strong," say many speakers,
 "If she winks, the Czar must come,
 Prow and topsail, to the breakers."

II.

"England's rich in coal and oak,"
 Adds a Roman, getting moody ;
 "If she shakes a travelling cloak,
 Down our Appian roll the scudi."

III.

"England's righteous," they rejoin :
 "Who shall grudge her exaltations, 10
 When her wealth of golden coin
 Works the welfare of the nations ?"

IV.

I am listening here in Rome.
 Over Alps a voice is sweeping —
 "England's cruel, save us some
 Of these victims in her keeping !"

V.

As the cry beneath the wheel
 Of an old triumphant Roman
 Cleft the people's shouts like steel,
 While the show was spoilt for no man, 20

VI.

Comes that voice. Let others shout,
Other poets praise my land here :
I am sadly sitting out,
Praying, " God forgive her grandeur."

VII.

Shall we boast of empire, where
Time with ruin sits commissioned ?
In God's liberal blue air
Peter's dome itself looks wizened ;

VIII.

And the mountains, in disdain,
Gather back their lights of opal 30
From the dumb despondent plain
Heaped with jawbones of a people.

IX.

Lordly English, think it o'er,
Cæsar's doing is all undone !
You have cannons on your shore,
And free Parliaments in London ;

X.

Princes' parks, and merchants' homes,
Tents for soldiers, ships for seamen, —
Ay, but ruins worse than Rome's
In your pauper men and women. 40

XI.

Women leering through the gas
(Just such bosoms used to nurse you),
Men, turned wolves by famine — pass !
Those can speak themselves, and curse you.

XII.

But these others — children small,
Spilt like blots about the city,
Quay, and street, and palace-wall —
Take them up into your pity !

XIII.

Ragged children with bare feet,
Whom the angels in white raiment 50
Know the names of, to repeat
When they come on you for payment.

XIV.

Ragged children, hungry-eyed,
Huddled up out of the coldness
On your doorsteps, side by side,
Till your footman damns their boldness.

XV.

In the alleys, in the squares,
Begging, lying little rebels ;
In the noisy thoroughfares,
Struggling on with piteous trebles. 60

xvi.

Patient children — think what pain
Makes a young child patient — ponder !
Wronged too commonly to strain
After right, or wish, or wonder.

xvii.

Wicked children, with peaked chins,
And old foreheads ! there are many
With no pleasures except sins,
Gambling with a stolen penny.

xviii.

Sickly children, that whine low
To themselves and not their mothers, 70
From mere habit, — never so
Hoping help or care from others.

xix.

Healthy children, with those blue
English eyes, fresh from their Maker,
Fierce and ravenous, staring through
At the brown loaves of the baker.

xx.

I am listening here in Rome,
And the Romans are confessing,
“ English children pass in bloom
All the prettiest made for blessing. 80

XXI.

“ *Angli angeli!* ” (resumed
 From the mediæval story)
 “ Such rose angelhoods, emblumed
 In such ringlets of pure glory ! ”

XXII.

Can we smoothen down the bright hair,
 O my sisters, calm, unthrilled in
 Our heart's pulses ? Can we bear
 The sweet looks of our own children,

XXIII.

While those others, lean and small,
 Scurf and mildew of the city,
 Spot our streets, convict us all
 Till we take them into pity ?

90

XXIV.

“ Is it our fault ? ” you reply,
 “ When, throughout civilisation,
 Every nation's empery
 Is asserted by starvation ? ”

XXV.

“ All these mouths we cannot feed,
 And we cannot clothe these bodies.”
 Well, if man's so hard indeed,
 Let them learn at least what God is !

100

A SONG FOR RAGGED SCHOOLS. 27

xxvi.

Little outcasts from life's fold,
The grave's hope they may be joined in,
By Christ's covenant consoled
For our social contract's grinding.

xxvii.

If no better can be done,
Let us do but this, — endeavour
That the sun behind the sun
Shine upon them while they shiver !

xxviii.

On the dismal London flags,
Through the cruel social juggle, 110
Put a thought beneath their rags
To ennoble the heart's struggle.

xxix.

O my sisters, not so much
Are we asked for — not a blossom
From our children's nosegay, such
As we gave it from our bosom, —

xxx.

Not the milk left in their cup,
Not the lamp while they are sleeping,
Not the little cloak hung up
While the coat's in daily keeping, — 120

xxx1.

But a place in RAGGED SCHOOLS,
 Where the outcasts may to-morrow
 Learn by gentle words and rules
 Just the uses of their sorrow.

xxxii.

O my sisters ! children small,
 Blue-eyed, wailing through the city —
 Our own babes cry in them all :
 Let us take them into pity.

MAY'S LOVE.

I.

You love all, you say,
 Round, beneath, above me :
 Find me then some way
 Better than to love me,
 Me, too, dearest May !

II.

O world-kissing eyes
 Which the blue heavens melt to ;
 I, sad, otherwise,
 Loathe the sweet looks dealt to
 All things — men and flies.

10

III.

You love all, you say :
 Therefore, Dear, abate me
 Just your love, I pray !
 Shut your eyes and hate me —
 Only *me* — fair May !

AMY'S CRUELTY.

I.

FAIR Amy of the terraced house,
 Assist me to discover
 Why you who would not hurt a mouse
 Can torture so your lover.

II.

You give your coffee to the cat,
 You stroke the dog for coming,
 And all your face grows kinder at
 The little brown bee's humming.

III.

But when *he* haunts your door . . . the town
 Marks coming and marks going . . . 10
 You seem to have stitched your eyelids down
 To that long piece of sewing !

IV.

You never give a look, not you,
 Nor drop him a "Good morning,"
 To keep his long day warm and blue,
 So fretted by your scorning.

V.

She shook her head — "The mouse and bee
 For crumb or flower will linger :
 The dog is happy at my knee,
 The cat purrs at my finger.

VI.

“ But *be* . . . to *him*, the least thing given
 Means great things at a distance ;
 He wants my world, my sun, my heaven,
 Soul, body, whole existence.

VII.

“ They say love gives as well as takes ;
 But I'm a simple maiden, —
 My mother's first smile when she wakes
 I still have smiled and prayed in.

VIII.

“ I only know my mother's love
 Which gives all and asks nothing ; 30
 And this new loving sets the groove
 Too much the way of loathing.

IX.

“ Unless he gives me all in change,
 I forfeit all things by him :
 The risk is terrible and strange —
 I tremble, doubt, . . . deny him.

X.

“ He's sweetest friend or hardest foe,
 Best angel or worst devil ;
 I either hate or . . . love him so,
 I can't be merely civil ! 40

XI.

“ You trust a woman who puts forth
Her blossoms thick as summer’s ?
You think she dreams what love is worth,
Who casts it to new-comers ?

XII.

“ Such love’s a cowslip-ball to fling,
A moment’s pretty pastime ;
I give . . . all me, if anything,
The first time and the last time.

XIII.

“ Dear neighbour of the trellised house,
A man should murmur never, 50
Though treated worse than dog and mouse,
Till doated on for ever ! ”

MY HEART AND I.

I.

ENOUGH ! we’re tired, my heart and I.
We sit beside the headstone thus,
And wish that name were carved for us.
The moss reprints more tenderly
The hard types of the mason’s knife,
As heaven’s sweet life renews earth’s life
With which we’re tired, my heart and I.

II.

You see we're tired, my heart and I.
 We dealt with books, we trusted men,
 And in our own blood drenched the pen, 10
 As if such colours could not fly.
 We walked too straight for fortune's end,
 We loved too true to keep a friend;
 At last we're tired, my heart and I.

III.

How tired we feel, my heart and I !
 We seem of no use in the world ;
 Our fancies hang grey and uncurled
 About men's eyes indifferently ;
 Our voice which thrilled you so, will let
 You sleep ; our tears are only wet : 20
 What do we here, my heart and I ?

IV.

So tired, so tired, my heart and I !
 It was not thus in that old time
 When Ralph sat with me 'neath the lime
 To watch the sunset from the sky.
 "Dear love, you're looking tired," he said ;
 I, smiling at him, shook my head :
 'Tis now we're tired, my heart and I.

V.

So tired, so tired, my heart and I !
 Though now none takes me on his arm 30
 To fold me close and kiss me warm

BEST THING IN THE WORLD. 33

Till each quick breath end in a sigh
Of happy languor. Now, alone,
We lean upon this graveyard stone,
Uncheered, unkissed, my heart and I.

VI.

Tired out we are, my heart and I.
Suppose the world brought diadems
To tempt us, crusted with loose gems
Of powers and pleasures? Let it try.
We scarcely care to look at even 40
A pretty child, or God's blue heaven,
We feel so tired, my heart and I.

VII.

Yet who complains? My heart and I?
In this abundant earth no doubt
Is little room for things worn out:
Disdain them, break them, throw them by!
And if before the days grew rough
We *once* were loved, used, — well enough,
I think, we've fared, my heart and I.

THE BEST THING IN THE WORLD.

WHAT'S the best thing in the world?
June-rose, by May-dew impearled;
Sweet south-wind, that means no rain;
Truth, not cruel to a friend;
Pleasure, not in haste to end;
Beauty, not self-decked and curled

Till its pride is over-plain ;
 Light, that never makes you wink ;
 Memory, that gives no pain ;
 Love, when, *so*, you're loved again.
 What's the best thing in the world ?
 — Something out of it, I think.

10

WHERE'S AGNES ?

I.

NAY, if I had come back so,
 And found her dead in her grave,
 And if a friend I know
 Had said, " Be strong, nor rave :
 She lies there, dead below :

II.

" I saw her, I who speak,
 White, stiff, the face one blank :
 The blue shade came to her cheek
 Before they nailed the plank,
 For she had been dead a week."

10

III.

Why, if he had spoken so,
 I might have believed the thing,
 Although her look, although
 Her step, laugh, voice's ring
 Lived in me still as they do.

IV.

But dead that other way,
Corrupted thus and lost ?
That sort of worm in the clay ?
I cannot count the cost,
That I should rise and pay. 20

V.

My Agnes false ? such shame ?
She ? Rather be it said
That the pure saint of her name
Has stood there in her stead,
And tricked you to this blame.

VI.

Her very gown, her cloak
Fell chastely : no disguise,
But expression ! while she broke
With her clear grey morning-eyes
Full upon me and then spoke. 30

VII.

She wore her hair away
From her forehead, — like a cloud
Which a little wind in May
Peels off finely : disallowed
Though bright enough to stay.

VIII.

For the heavens must have the place
To themselves, to use and shine in,
As her soul would have her face
To press through upon mine, in
That orb of angel grace. 40

IX.

Had she any fault at all,
 'Twas having none, I thought too —
 There seemed a sort of thrall ;
 As she felt her shadow ought to
 Fall straight upon the wall.

X.

Her sweetness strained the sense
 Of common life and duty ;
 And every day's expense
 Of moving in such beauty
 Required, almost, defence. 50

XI.

What good, I thought, is done
 By such sweet things, if any ?
 This world smells ill i' the sun
 Though the garden-flowers are many, —
She is only one.

XII.

Can a voice so low and soft
 Take open actual part
 With Right, — maintain aloft
 Pure truth in life or art,
 Vexed always, wounded oft ? — 60

XIII.

She fit, with that fair pose
 Which melts from curve to curve,
 To stand, run, work with those
 Who wrestle and deserve,
 And speak plain without glose ?

xiv.

But I turned round on my fear
 Defiant, disagreeing —
 What if God has set her here
 Less for action than for Being? —
 For the eye and for the ear. 70

xv.

Just to show what beauty may,
 Just to prove what music can, —
 And then to die away
 From the presence of a man,
 Who shall learn, henceforth, to pray?

xvi.

As a door, left half ajar
 In heaven, would make him think
 How heavenly-different are
 Things glanced at through the chink,
 Till he pined from near to far. 80

xvii.

That door could lead to hell?
 That shining merely meant
 Damnation? What! She fell
 Like a woman, who was sent
 Like an angel, by a spell?

xviii.

She, who scarcely trod the earth,
 Turned mere dirt? My Agnes, — mine!
 Called so! felt of too much worth
 To be used so! too divine
 To be breathed near, and so forth! 90

XIX.

Why, I dared not name a sin
 In her presence : I went round,
 Clipped its name and shut it in
 Some mysterious crystal sound, —
 Changed the dagger for the pin.

XX.

Now you name herself *that word* ?
 O my Agnes ! O my saint !
 Then the great joys of the Lord
 Do not last ? Then all this paint
 Runs off nature ? leaves a board ? 100

XXI.

Who's dead here ? No, not she :
 Rather I ! or whence this damp
 Cold corruption's misery ?
 While my very mourners stamp
 Closer in the clods on me.

XXII.

And my mouth is full of dust
 Till I cannot speak and curse —
 Speak and damn him . . . " Blame's un-
 just " ?
 Sin blots out the universe,
 All because she would and must ? 110

XXIII.

She, my white rose, dropping off
 The high rose-tree branch ! and not

That the night-wind blew too rough,
 Or the noon-sun burnt too hot,
 But, that being a rose — 'twas enough !

XXIV.

Then henceforth may earth grow trees !
 No more roses ! — hard straight lines
 To score lies out ! none of these
 Fluctuant curves, but firs and pines,
 Poplars, cedars, cypresses !

120

DE PROFUNDIS.

I.

THE face which, duly as the sun,
 Rose up for me with life begun,
 To mark all bright hours of the day
 With hourly love, is dimmed away, —
 And yet my days go on, go on.

II.

The tongue which, like a stream, could run
 Smooth music from the roughest stone,
 And every morning with " Good day "
 Make each day good, is hushed away, —
 And yet my days go on, go on.

10

III.

The heart which, like a staff, was one
 For mine to lean and rest upon,
 The strongest on the longest day
 With steadfast love, is caught away, —
 And yet my days go on, go on.

IV.

And cold before my summer's done,
 And deaf in Nature's general tune,
 And fallen too low for special fear,
 And here, with hope no longer here, —
 While the tears drop, my days go on. 20

V.

The world goes whispering to its own,
 " This anguish pierces to the bone "
 And tender friends go sighing round,
 " What love can ever cure this wound ? "
 My days go on, my days go on.

VI.

The past rolls forward on the sun
 And makes all night. O dreams begun,
 Not to be ended ! Ended bliss,
 And life that will not end in this !
 My days go on, my days go on. 30

VII.

Breath freezes on my lips to moan :
 As one alone, once not alone,
 I sit and knock at Nature's door,
 Heart-bare, heart-hungry, very poor,
 Whose desolated days go on.

VIII.

I knock and cry, — Undone, undone !
 Is there no help, no comfort, — none ?
 No gleaning in the wide wheat plains
 Where others drive their loaded wains ?
 My vacant days go on, go on. 40

IX.

This Nature, though the snows be down,
Thinks kindly of the bird of June :
The little red hip on the tree
Is ripe for such. What is for me,
Whose days so winterly go on ?

X.

No bird am I, to sing in June,
And dare not ask an equal boon.
Good nests and berries red are Nature's
To give away to better creatures, —
And yet my days go on, go on. 50

XI.

I ask less kindness to be done, —
Only to loose these pilgrim-shoon,
(Too early worn and grimed) with sweet
Cool deathly touch to these tired feet.
Till days go out which now go on.

XII.

Only to lift the turf unmown
From off the earth where it has grown,
Some cubit-space, and say "Behold,
Creep in, poor Heart, beneath that fold,
Forgetting how the days go on." 60

XIII.

What harm would that do ? Green anon
The sward would quicken, overshone
By skies as blue ; and crickets might
Have leave to chirp there day and night
While my new rest went on, went on.

XIV.

From gracious nature have I won
 Such liberal bounty ? may I run
 So, lizard-like, within her side,
 And there be safe, who now am tried
 By days that painfully go on ? 70

XV.

— A Voice reproves me thereupon,
 More sweet than Nature's when the drone
 Of bees is sweetest and more deep
 Than when the rivers overleap
 The shuddering pines, and thunder on.

XVI.

God's Voice, not Nature's ! Night and noon
 He sits upon the great white throne
 And listens for the creatures' praise.
 What babble we of days and days ?
 The Day-spring He, whose days go on. 80

XVII.

He reigns above, He reigns alone ;
 Systems burn out and leave His throne ;
 Fair mists of seraphs melt and fall
 Around Him, changeless amid all, —
 Ancient of Days, whose days go on.

XVIII.

He reigns below, He reigns alone,
 And, having life in love forgone
 Beneath the crown of sovran thorns,
 He reigns the Jealous God. Who mourns
 Or rules with Him, while days go on ? 90

XIX.

By anguish which made pale the sun,
I hear Him charge His saints that none
Among His creatures anywhere
Blasphe^me against him with despair,
However darkly days go on.

XX.

Take from my head the thorn-wreath brown !
No mortal grief deserves that crown.
O sup^{re}me Love, chief misery,
The sharp regalia are for THEE
Whose days eternally go on !

100

XXI.

For us, — whatever's undergone,
Thou knowest, willest what is done.
Grief may be joy misunderstood ;
Only the Good discerns the good.
I trust Thee while my days go on.

XXII.

Whatever's lost, it first was won ;
We will not struggle nor impugn.
Perhaps the cup was broken here,
That Heaven's new wine might show more clear.
I praise Thee while my days go on.

110

XXIII.

I praise Thee while my days go on ;
I love Thee while my days go on :
Through dark and dearth, through fire and frost,
With emptied arms and treasure lost,
I thank Thee while my days go on.

XXIV.

And having in thy life-depth thrown
 Being and suffering (which are one),
 As a child drops his pebble small
 Down some deep well, and hears it fall
 Smiling — so I. THY DAYS GO ON. 120

A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT.

I.

WHAT was he doing, the great god Pan,
 Down in the reeds by the river?
 Spreading ruin and scattering ban,
 Splashing and paddling with hoofs of a goat,
 And breaking the golden lilies afloat
 With the dragon-fly on the river.

II.

He tore out a reed, the great god Pan,
 From the deep cool bed of the river:
 The limpid water turbidly ran,
 And the broken lilies a-dying lay, 10
 And the dragon-fly had fled away,
 Ere he brought it out of the river.

III.

High on the shore sat the great god Pan
 While turbidly flowed the river;
 And hacked and hewed as a great god can,
 With his hard bleak steel at the patient reed,
 Till there was not a sign of the leaf indeed
 To prove it fresh from the river.

IV.

He cut it short, did the great god Pan,
(How tall it stood in the river !) 20
Then drew the pith, like the heart of a man,
Steadily from the outside ring,
And notched the poor dry empty thing
In holes, as he sat by the river.

V.

“This is the way,” laughed the great god Pan
(Laughed while he sat by the river),
“The only way, since gods began
To make sweet music, they could succeed.”
Then, dropping his mouth to a hole in the reed,
He blew in power by the river. 30

VI.

Sweet, sweet, sweet, O Pan !
Piercing sweet by the river !
Blinding sweet, O great god Pan !
The sun on the hill forgot to die,
And the lilies revived, and the dragon-fly
Came back to dream on the river.

VII.

Yet half a beast is the great god Pan,
To laugh as he sits by the river,
Making a poet out of a man :
The true gods sigh for the cost and pain, — 40
For the reed which grows nevermore again
As a reed with the reeds in the river.

FIRST NEWS FROM VILLAFRANCA.

I.

PEACE, peace, peace, do you say ?
What ! — with the enemy's guns in our ears ?
With the country's wrong not rendered back ?
What ! — while Austria stands at bay
In Mantua, and our Venice bears
The cursed flag of the yellow and black ?

II.

Peace, peace, peace, do you say ?
And this the Mincio ? Where's the fleet,
And where's the sea ? Are we all blind
Or mad with the blood shed yesterday, 10
Ignoring Italy under our feet,
And seeing things before, behind ?

III.

Peace, peace, peace, do you say ?
What ! — uncontested, undenied ?
Because we triumph, we succumb ?
A pair of Emperors stand in the way
(One of whom is a man, beside),
To sign and seal our cannons dumb ?

IV.

No, not Napoleon ! — he who mused
At Paris, and at Milan spake, 20
And at Solferino led the fight :

FIRST NEWS FROM VILLAFRANCA. 47

Not he we trusted, honoured, used
Our hopes and hearts for . . . till they break
Even so, you tell us . . . in his sight.

v.

Peace, peace, is still your word ?
We say you lie then ! — that is plain.
There *is* no peace, and shall be none.
Our very Dead would cry “ Absurd ! ”
And clamour that they died in vain,
And whine to come back to the sun. 30

vi.

Hush ! more reverence for the Dead !
They’ve done the most for Italy
Evermore since the earth was fair.
Now would that *we* had died instead,
Still dreaming peace meant liberty,
And did not, could not, mean despair.

vii.

Peace, you say ? — yes, peace, in truth !
But such a peace as the ear can achieve
’Twixt the rifle’s click and the rush of the ball,
’Twixt the tiger’s spring and the crunch of the
tooth, 40
’Twixt the dying atheist’s negative
And God’s Face — waiting, after all !

KING VICTOR EMANUEL ENTERING
FLORENCE, APRIL 1860.

I.

KING of us all, we cried to thee, cried to thee,
Trampled to earth by the beasts impure,
Dragged by the chariots which shame as they
roll :
The dust of our torment far and wide to thee
Went up, dark'ning thy royal soul.
Be witness, Cavour,
That the King was sad for the people in thrall,
This King of us all !

II.

King, we cried to thee ! Strong in replying, 9
Thy word and thy sword sprang rapid and sure,
Cleaving our way to a nation's place.
Oh, first soldier of Italy ! — crying
Now grateful, exultant, we look in thy face.
Be witness, Cavour,
That, freedom's first soldier, the freed should call
First King of them all !

III.

This is our beautiful Italy's birthday ;
High-thoughted souls, whether many or fewer,
Bring her the gift, and wish her the good,
While Heaven presents on this sunny earth-day 20
The noble King to the land renewed :
Be witness, Cavour !
Roar, cannon-mouths ! Proclaim, install
The King of us all !

IV.

Grave he rides through the Florence gateway,
Clenching his face into calm, to immure
His struggling heart till it half disappears ;
If he relaxed for a moment, straightway
He would break out into passionate tears —
(Be witness, Cavour !) 30
While rings the cry without interval,
“ Live, King of us all ! ”

V.

Cry, free peoples ! Honour the nation
By crowning the true man — and none is truer :
Pisa is here, and Livorno is here,
And thousands of faces, in wild exultation,
Burn over the windows to feel him near —
(Be witness, Cavour !)
Burn over from terrace, roof, window and wall,
On this King of us all. 40

VI.

Grave ! A good man's ever the graver
For bearing a nation's trust secure ;
And *be*, he thinks of the Heart, beside,
Which broke for Italy, failing to save her,
And pining away by Oporto's tide :
Be witness, Cavour,
That he thinks of his vow on that royal pall,
This King of us all.

VII.

Flowers, flowers, from the flowery city !
 Such innocent thanks for a deed so pure, 50
 As, melting away for joy into flowers,
 The nation invites him to enter his Pitti
 And evermore reign in this Florence of ours.
 Be witness, Cavour !
 He'll stand where the reptiles were used to crawl,
 This King of us all.

VIII.

Grave, as the manner of noble men is —
 Deeds unfinished will weigh on the doer :
 And, baring his head to those crape-veiled flags,
 He bows to the grief of the South and Venice. 60
 Oh, riddle the last of the yellow to rags,
 And swear by Cavour
 That the King shall reign where the tyrants fall,
 True King of us all !

THE SWORD OF CASTRUCCIO
 CASTRACANI.

“Questa è per me.” — *King Victor Emanuel.*

I.

WHEN Victor Emanuel the King
 Went down to his Lucca that day,
 The people, each vaunting the thing
 As he gave it, gave all things away, —
 In a burst of fierce gratitude, say,
 As they tore out their hearts for the King.

II.

— Gave the green forest-walk on the wall,
 With the Apennine blue through the trees ;
 Gave the palaces, churches, and all
 The great pictures which burn out of these : 10
 But the eyes of the King seemed to freeze
 As he gazed upon ceiling and wall.

III.

“ Good,” said the King as he passed.
 Was he cold to the arts ? — or else coy
 To possession ? or crossed, at the last
 (Whispered some), by the vote in Savoy ?
 Shout ! Love him enough for his joy !
 “ Good,” said the King as he passed.

IV.

He, travelling the whole day through flowers
 And protesting amenities, found 20
 At Pistoia, betwixt the two showers
 Of red roses, the “ Orphans ” (renowned
 As the heirs of Puccini) who wound
 With a sword through the crowd and the flowers.

V.

“ ’Tis the sword of Castruccio, O King, —
 In that strife of intestinal hate,
 Very famous ! Accept what we bring,
 We who cannot be sons, by our fate,
 Rendered citizens by thee of late,
 And endowed with a country and king. 30

VI.

“Read ! Puccini has willed that this sword
 (Which once made in an ignorant feud
 Many orphans) remain in our ward
 Till some patriot its pure civic blood
 Wipe away in the foe’s and make good,
 In delivering the land by the sword.”

VII.

Then the King exclaimed “This is for *me* !”
 And he dashed out his hand on the hilt,
 While his blue eyes shot fire openly,
 And his heart overboiled till it spilt 40
 A hot prayer, — “God ! the rest as Thou wilt !
 But grant me this ! — *This* is for *me*.”

VIII.

O Victor Emanuel, the King,
 The sword is for *thee*, and the deed,
 And nought for the alien, next spring,
 Nought for Hapsburg and Bourbon agreed —
 But, for us, a great Italy freed,
 With a hero to head us, — our King !

SUMMING UP IN ITALY.

(INSCRIBED TO INTELLIGENT PUBLICS OUT OF IT.)

I.

OBSERVE how it will be at last,
 When our Italy stands at full stature,
 A year ago tied down so fast
 That the cord cut the quick of her nature !

You'll honour the deed and its scope,
 Then, in logical sequence upon it,
 Will use up the remnants of rope
 By hanging the men who have done it.

II.

The speech in the Commons, which hits you
 A sketch off, how dungeons must feel, — 10
 The official despatch, which commits you
 From stamping out groans with your heel, —
 Suggestions in journal or book for
 Good efforts, — are praised as is meet :
 But what in the world can men look for,
 Who only achieve and complete ?

III.

True, you've praise for the fireman who sets his
 Brave face to the axe of the flame,
 Disappears in the smoke, and then fetches
 A babe down, or idiot that's lame, — 20
 For the boor even, who rescues through pity
 A sheep from the brute who would kick it :
 But saviours of nations ! — 'tis pretty,
 And doubtful ; they *may* be so wicked :

IV.

Azeglio, Farini, Mamiani,
 Ricasoli, — doubt by the dozen ! — here's
 Pepoli too, and Cipriani,
 Imperial cousins and cozeners —
 Arese, Laiatico, — courtly
 Of manners, if stringent of mouth : 30
 Garibaldi ! we'll come to him shortly
 (As soon as he *ends* in the South).

V.

Napoleon — as strong as ten armies,
 Corrupt as seven devils — a fact
 You accede to, then seek where the harm is
 Drained off from the man to his act,
 And find — a free nation ! Suppose
 Some hell-brood in Eden's sweet greenery,
 Convoled for creating — a rose !
 Would it suit the infernal machinery ? 40

VI.

Cavour, — to the despot's desire,
 Who his own thought so craftily marries —
 What is he but just a thin wire
 For conducting the lightning from Paris ?
 Yes, write down the two as compeers,
 Confessing (you would not permit a lie)
 He bore up his Piedmont ten years
 Till she suddenly smiled and was Italy.

VII.

And the King, with that "stain on his scutcheon,"
 Savoy — as the calumny runs ; 50
 (If it be not his blood, — with his clutch on
 The sword, and his face to the guns.)
 O first, where the battle-storm gathers,
 O loyal of heart on the throne,
 Let those keep the "graves of their fathers"
 Who quail, in a nerve, from their own !

VIII.

For *thee* — through the dim Hades-portal
 The dream of a voice — "Blessed thou
 Who hast made all thy race twice immortal !
 No need of the sepulchres now ! 60
 — Left to Bourbons and Hapsburgs, who fester
 Above-ground with worm-eaten souls,
 While the ghost of some pale feudal jester
 Before them strews treaties in holes."

IX.

But hush ! — am I dreaming a poem
 'Of Hades, Heaven, Justice ? Not I ;
 I began too far off, in my poem,
 With what men believe and deny :
 And on earth, whatsoever the need is
 (To sum up as thoughtful reviewers), 70
 The moral of every great deed is —
 The virtue of slandering the doers.

"DIED . . ."

(*The "Times" Obituary.*)

I.

WHAT shall we add now ? He is dead.
 And I who praise and you who blame,
 With wash of words across his name,
 Find suddenly declared instead —
 "On Sunday, third of August, dead."

II.

Which stops the whole we talked to-day.
 I, quickened to a plausive glance
 At his large general tolerance
 By common people's narrow way,
 Stopped short in praising. Dead, they say. 10

III.

And you, who had just put in a sort
 Of cold deduction — "rather, large
 Through weakness of the continent marge,
 Than greatness of the thing contained" —
 Broke off. Dead! — there, you stood restrained.

IV.

As if we had talked in following one
 Up some long gallery. "Would you choose
 An air like that? The gait is loose —
 Or noble." Sudden in the sun
 An oubliette winks. Where *is* he? Gone. 20

V.

Dead. Man's "I was" by God's "I am" —
 All hero-worship comes to that.
 High heart, high thought, high fame, as flat
 As a gravestone. Bring your *Jacet jam* —
 The epitaph's an epigram.

VI.

Dead. There's an answer to arrest
 All carping. Dust's his natural place?
 He'll let the flies buzz round his face
 And, though you slander, not protest?
 — From such an one, exact the Best? 30

THE FORCED RECRUIT.

57

VII.

Opinions gold or brass are null.
We chuck our flattery or abuse,
Called Cæsar's due, as Charon's dues,
I' the teeth of some dead sage or fool,
To mend the grinning of a skull.

VIII.

Be abstinent in praise and blame.
The man's still mortal, who stands first,
And mortal only, if last and worst.
Then slowly lift so frail a fame,
Or softly drop so poor a shame.

40

THE FORCED RECRUIT.

(SOLFERINO, 1859.)

I.

In the ranks of the Austrian you found him,
He died with his face to you all ;
Yet bury him here where around him
You honour your bravest that fall.

II.

Venetian, fair-featured and slender,
He lies shot to death in his youth,
With a smile on his lips over-tender
For any mere soldier's dead mouth.

III.

No stranger, and yet not a traitor,
Though alien the cloth on his breast, 10
Underneath it how seldom a greater
Young heart has a shot sent to rest !

IV.

By your enemy tortured and goaded
To march with them, stand in their file,
His musket (see) never was loaded,
He facing your guns with that smile !

V.

As orphans yearn on to their mothers,
He yearned to your patriot bands ; —
“ Let me die for our Italy, brothers,
If not in your ranks, by your hands ! 20

VI.

“ Aim straightly, fire steadily ! spare me
A ball in the body which may
Deliver my heart here, and tear me
This badge of the Austrian away ! ”

VII.

So thought he, so died he this morning.
What then ? many others have died.
Ay, but easy for men to die scorning
The death-stroke, who fought side by side —

VIII.

One tricolor floating above them ;
 Struck down 'mid triumphant acclaims 30
 Of an Italy rescued to love them
 And blazon the brass with their names.

IX.

But he, — without witness or honour,
 Mixed, shamed in his country's regard,
 With the tyrants who march in upon her,
 Died faithful and passive : 'twas hard.

X.

'Twas sublime. In a cruel restriction
 Cut off from the guerdon of sons,
 With most filial obedience, conviction,
 His soul kissed the lips of her guns. 40

XI.

That moves you? Nay, grudge not to show it,
 While digging a grave for him here :
 The others who died, says your poet,
 Have glory, — let *him* have a tear.

GARIBALDI.

I.

He bent his head upon his breast
 Wherein his lion-heart lay sick : —
 “ Perhaps we are not ill-repaid ;
 Perhaps this is not a true test ;
 Perhaps this was not a foul trick ;
 Perhaps none wronged, and none betrayed.

II.

" Perhaps the people's vote which here
 United, there may disunite,
 And both be lawful as they think ;
 Perhaps a patriot statesman, dear 10
 For chartering nations, can with right
 Disfranchise those who hold the ink.

III.

" Perhaps men's wisdom is not craft ;
 Men's greatness, not a selfish greed ;
 Men's justice, not the safer side ;
 Perhaps even women, when they laughed,
 Wept, thanked us that the land was freed,
 Not wholly (though they kissed us) lied.

IV.

" Perhaps no more than this we meant,
 When up at Austria's guns we flew, 20
 And quenched them with a cry apiece,
Italia ! — Yet a dream was sent . . .
 The little house my father knew,
 The olives and the palms of Nice."

V.

He paused, and drew his sword out slow,
 Then pored upon the blade intent,
 As if to read some written thing ;
 While many murmured, — " He will go
 In that despairing sentiment
 And break his sword before the King." 30

VI.

He poring still upon the blade,
 His large lid quivered, something fell.
 "Perhaps," he said, "I was not born
 With such fine brains to treat and trade, —
 And if a woman knew it well,
 Her falsehood only meant her scorn.

VII.

"Yet through Varese's cannon-smoke
 My eye saw clear : men feared this man
 At Como, where this sword could seal
 Death's protocol with every stroke : 40
 And now . . . the drop there scarcely can
 Impair the keenness of the steel.

VIII.

"So man and sword may have their use ;
 And if the soil beneath my foot
 In valour's act is forfeited,
 I'll strike the harder, take my dues
 Out nobler, and all loss confute
 From ampler heavens above my head.

IX.

"My King, King Victor, I am thine !
 So much Nice-dust as what I am 50
 (To make our Italy) must cleave.
 Forgive that." Forward with a sign
 He went.

You've seen the telegram ?
Palermo's taken, we believe.

ONLY A CURL.

I.

FRIENDS of faces unknown and a land
Unvisited over the sea,
Who tell me how lonely you stand
With a single gold curl in the hand
Held up to be looked at by me, —

II.

While you ask me to ponder and say
What a father and mother can do,
With the bright fellow-locks put away
Out of reach, beyond kiss, in the clay
Where the violets press nearer than you : 10

III.

Shall I speak like a poet, or run
Into weak woman's tears for relief ?
Oh, children ! — I never lost one, —
Yet my arm's round my own little son,
And Love knows the secret of Grief.

IV.

And I feel what it must be and is,
When God draws a new angel so
Through the house of a man up to His,
With a murmur of music you miss,
And a rapture of light you forgo. 20

v.

How you think, staring on at the door,
 Where the face of your angel flashed in,
 That its brightness, familiar before,
 Burns off from you ever the more
 For the dark of your sorrow and sin.

vi.

“God lent him and takes him,” you sigh ;
 — Nay, there let me break with your pain :
 God’s generous in giving, say I, —
 And the thing which He gives, I deny
 That He ever can take back again. 30

vii.

He gives what He gives. I appeal
 To all who bear babes — in the hour
 When the veil of the body we feel
 Rent round us, — while torments reveal
 The motherhood’s advent in power,

viii.

And the babe cries ! — has each of us known
 By apocalypse (God being there
 Full in nature) the child is our own,
 Life of life, love of love, moan of moan,
 Through all changes, all times, everywhere. 40

ix.

He’s ours and for ever. Believe,
 O father ! — O mother, look back

To the first love's assurance ! To give
Means with God not to tempt or deceive
With a cup thrust in Benjamin's sack.

x.

He gives what He gives. Be content !
He resumes nothing given, — be sure !
God lend ? Where the usurers lent
In His temple, indignant He went
And scourged away all those impure. 50

xi.

He lends not ; but gives to the end,
As He loves to the end. If it seem
That He draws back a gift, comprehend
'Tis to add to it rather, — amend,
And finish it up to your dream, —

xii.

Or keep, — as a mother will toys
Too costly, though given by herself,
Till the room shall be stiller from noise,
And the children more fit for such joys,
Kept over their heads on the shelf. 60

xiii.

So look up, friends ! you, who indeed
Have possessed in your house a sweet piece
Of the Heaven which men strive for, must need
Be more earnest than others are, — speed
Where they loiter, persist where they cease.

VIEW ACROSS ROMAN CAMPAGNA. 65

XIV.

You know how one angel smiles there :
Then weep not. 'Tis easy for you
To be drawn by a single gold hair
Of that curl, from earth's storm and despair,
To the safe place above us. Adieu. 70

A VIEW ACROSS THE ROMAN
CAMPAGNA.

(1861.)

I.

OVER the dumb Campagna-sea,
Out in the offing through mist and rain,
Saint Peter's Church heaves silently
Like a mighty ship in pain,
Facing the tempest with struggle and strain.

II.

Motionless waifs of ruined towers,
Soundless breakers of desolate land :
The sullen surf of the mist devours
That mountain-range upon either hand,
Eaten away from its outline grand. 10

III.

And over the dumb Campagna-sea
Where the ship of the Church heaves on to wreck,
Alone and silent as God must be,
The Christ walks. Ay, but Peter's neck
Is stiff to turn on the foundering deck.

IV.

Peter, Peter ! if such be thy name,
Now leave the ship for another to steer,
And proving thy faith evermore the same,
Come forth, tread out through the dark and drear,
Since He who walks on the sea is here. 20

V.

Peter, Peter ! He does not speak ;
He is not as rash as in old Galilee :
Safer a ship, though it toss and leak,
Than a reeling foot on a rolling sea !
And he's got to be round in the girth, thinks he.

VI.

Peter, Peter ! He does not stir ;
His nets are heavy with silver fish ;
He reckons his gains, and is keen to infer
—“ The broil on the shore, if the Lord should wish ;
But the sturgeon goes to the Cæsar's dish.” 30

VII.

Peter, Peter ! thou fisher of men,
Fisher of fish wouldst thou live instead ?
Haggling for pence with the other Ten,
Cheating the market at so much a head,
Gripping the Bag of the traitor Dead ?

VIII.

At the triple crow of the Gallic cock
Thou weep'st not, thou, though thine eyes be dazed :
What bird comes next in the tempest-shock ?
— Vultures ! see, — as when Romulus gazed, —
To inaugurate Rome for a world amazed ! 40

THE KING'S GIFT.

I.

TERESA, ah, Teresita !
 Now what has the messenger brought her,
 Our Garibaldi's young daughter,
 To make her stop short in her singing ?
 Will she not once more repeat a
 Verse from that hymn of our hero's,
 Setting the souls of us ringing ?
 Break off the song where the tear rose ?
 Ah, Teresita !

II.

A young thing, mark, is Teresa : 10
 Her eyes have caught fire, to be sure, in
 That necklace of jewels from Turin,
 Till blind their regard to us men is.
 But still she remembers to raise a
 Sly look to her father, and note —
 " Could she sing on as well about Venice,
 Yet wear such a flame at her throat ?
 Decide for Teresa."

III.

Teresa, ah, Teresita !
 His right hand has paused on her head — 20
 " Accept it, my daughter," he said ;
 " Ay, wear it, true child of thy mother !
 Then sing, till all start to their feet, a
 New verse ever bolder and freer !
 King Victor's no king like another,
 But verily noble as *we* are,
 Child, Teresita !"

PARTING LOVERS.

(SIENA, 1860.)

I.

I LOVE thee, love thee, Giulio ;
Some call me cold, and some demure ;
And if thou hast ever guessed that so
I loved thee . . . well, the proof was poor
And no one could be sure.

II.

Before thy song (with shifted rhymes
To suit my name) did I undo
The persian ? If it stirred sometimes,
Thou hast not seen a hand push through
A foolish flower or two. 10

III.

My mother listening to my sleep,
Heard nothing but a sigh at night, —
The short sigh rippling on the deep,
When hearts run out of breath and sight
Of men, to God's clear light.

IV.

When others named thee, — thought thy brows
Were straight, thy smile was tender — “ Here
He comes between the vineyard-rows ! ”
I said not “ Ay,” nor waited, Dear,
To feel thee step too near. 20

V.

I left such things to bolder girls, —
Olivia or Clotilda. Nay,
When that Clotilda, through her curls,
Held both thine eyes in hers one day,
I marvelled, let me say.

VI.

I could not try the woman's trick :
Between us straightway fell the blush
Which kept me separate, blind and sick.
A wind came with thee in a flush,
As blown through Sinai's bush. 30

VII.

But now that Italy invokes
Her young men to go forth and chase
The foe or perish, — nothing chokes
My voice, or drives me from the place.
I look thee in the face.

VIII.

I love thee ! It is understood,
Confest : I do not shrink or start.
No blushes ! all my body's blood
Has gone to greaten this poor heart.
That, loving, we may part. 40

IX.

Our Italy invokes the youth
To die if need be. Still there's room,
Though earth is strained with dead in truth :
Since twice the lilies were in bloom
They have not grudged a tomb.

x.

And many a plighted maid and wife
 And mother, who can say since then
 "My country," — cannot say through life
 "My son," "my spouse," "my flower of men,"
 And not weep dumb again. 50

xi.

Heroic males the country bears, —
 But daughters give up more than sons :
 Flags wave, drums beat, and unawares
 You flash your souls out with the guns,
 And take your Heaven at once.

xii.

But we ! — we empty heart and home
 Of life's life, love ! We bear to think
 You're gone, — to feel you may not come, —
 To hear the door-latch stir and clink,
 Yet no more you ! . . . nor sink. 60

xiii.

Dear God ! when Italy is one,
 Complete, content from bound to bound,
 Suppose, for my share, earth's undone
 By one grave in't ! — as one small wound
 Will kill a man, 'tis found.

xiv.

What then ? If love's delight must end,
 At least we'll clear its truth from flaws.
 I love thee, love thee, sweetest friend !
 Now take my sweetest without pause,
 And help the nation's cause. 70

xv.

And thus, of noble Italy
 We'll both be worthy ! Let her show
 The future how we made her free,
 Not sparing life . . . nor Giulio,
 Nor this . . . this heartbreak ! Go.

MOTHER AND POET.

(TURIN, AFTER NEWS FROM GAETA, 1861.)

I.

DEAD ! One of them shot by the sea in the east,
 And one of them shot in the west by the sea.
 Dead ! both my boys ! When you sit at the feast
 And are wanting a great song for Italy free,
 Let none look at *me* !

II.

Yet I was a poetess only last year,
 And good at my art, for a woman, men said ;
 But *this* woman, *this*, who is agonised here,
 — The east sea and west sea rhyme on in her head
 For ever instead. 10

III.

What art can a woman be good at ? Oh, vain !
 What art *is* she good at, but hurting her breast
 With the milk-teeth of babes, and a smile at the pain ?
 Ah boys, how you hurt ! you were strong as you
 pressed,
 And I proud, by that test.

IV.

What art's for a woman ? To hold on her knees
 Both darlings ! to feel all their arms round her
 throat,
 Cling, strangle a little ! to sew by degrees
 And 'broider the long-clothes and neat little coat ;
 To dream and to doat. 20

V.

To teach them . . . It stings there ! *I* made them
 indeed
 Speak plain the word *country*. *I* taught them, no
 doubt,
 That a country's a thing men should die for at need.
I prated of liberty, rights, and about
 The tyrant cast out.

VI.

And when their eyes flashed . . . O my beautiful
 eyes ! . . .
I exulted ; nay, let them go forth at the wheels
 Of the guns, and denied not. But then the surprise
 When one sits quite alone ! Then one weeps, then
 one kneels !
 God, how the house feels ! 30

VII.

At first, happy news came, in gay letters moiled
 With my kisses, — of camp-life and glory, and
 how
 They both loved me ; and, soon coming home to be
 spoiled
 In return would fan off every fly from my brow
 With their green laurel-bough.

VIII.

Then was triumph at Turin : " Ancona was free ! "
 And some one came out of the cheers in the street,
 With a face pale as stone, to say something to me.
 My Guido was dead ! I fell down at his feet,
 While they cheered in the street. 40

IX.

I bore it ; friends soothed me ; my grief looked sub-
 lime
 As the ransom of Italy. One boy remained
 To be leant on and walked with, recalling the time
 When the first grew immortal, while both of us
 strained
 To the height he had gained.

X.

And letters still came, shorter, sadder, more strong,
 Writ now but in one hand, " I was not to faint,—
 One loved me for two — would be with me ere
 long :
 And *Viva l' Italia !* — *he* died for, our saint,
 Who forbids our complaint." 50

XI.

My Nanni would add, " he was safe, and aware
 Of a presence that turned off the balls,— was im-
 prest
 It was Guido himself, who knew what I could bear,
 And how 'twas impossible, quite dispossessed
 To live on for the rest."

XII.

On which, without pause, up the telegraph line
 Swept smoothly the next news from Gaeta : — *Shot.*
Tell his mother. Ah, ah, "his," "their" mother,—
 not "mine,"
 No voice says "My mother" again to me. What !
 You think Guido forgot ? 60

XIII.

Are souls straight so happy that, dizzy with Heaven,
 They drop earth's affections, conceive not of woe ?
 I think not. Themselves were too lately forgiven
 Through THAT Love and Sorrow which reconciled
 so
 The Above and Below.

XIV.

O Christ of the five wounds, who look'dst through
 the dark
 To the face of Thy mother ! consider, I pray,
 How we common mothers stand desolate, mark,
 Whose sons, not being Christs, die with eyes turned
 away,
 And no last word to say ! 70

XV.

Both boys dead ? but that's out of nature. We all
 Have been patriots, yet each house must always
 keep one.
 'Twere imbecile, hewing out roads to a wall ;
 And, when Italy's made, for what end is it done
 If we have not a son ?

xvi.

Ah, ah, ah ! when Gaeta's taken, what then ?
 When the fair wicked queen sits no more at her
 sport
 Of the fire-balls of death crashing souls out of men ?
 When the guns of Cavalli with final retort
 Have cut the game short ? 80

xvii.

When Venice and Rome keep their new jubilee,
 When your flag takes all heaven for its white,
 green, and red,
 When *you* have your country from mountain to sea,
 When King Victor has Italy's crown on his head,
 (And *I* have my Dead) —

xviii.

What then ? Do not mock me. Ah, ring your bells
 low,
 And burn your lights faintly ! *My* country is
there,
 Above the star pricked by the last peak of snow :
 My Italy's *THERE*, with my brave civic Pair,
 To disfranchise despair ! 90

xix.

Forgive me. Some women bear children in strength,
 And bite back the cry of their pain in self-scorn ;
 But the birth-pangs of nations will wring us at length
 Into wail such as this — and we sit on forlorn
 When the man-child is born.

XX.

Dead ! One of them shot by the sea in the east,
 And one of them shot in the west by the sea.
 Both ! both my boys ! If in keeping the feast
 You want a great song for your Italy free,
 Let none look at *me* ! 100

NATURE'S REMORSES.

(ROME, 1861.)

I.

HER soul was bred by a throne, and fed
 From the sucking-bottle used in her race
 On starch and water (for mother's milk
 Which gives a larger growth instead),
 And, out of the natural liberal grace,
 Was swaddled away in violet silk.

II.

And young and kind, and royally blind,
 Forth she stepped from her palace-door
 On three-piled carpet of compliments,
 Curtains of incense drawn by the wind 10
 In between her for evermore
 And daylight issues of events.

III.

On she drew, as a queen might do,
 To meet a Dream of Italy, —
 Of magical town and musical wave,
 Where even a god, his amulet blue
 Of shining sea, in an ecstasy
 Dropt and forgot in a Nereid's cave.

IV.

Down she goes, as the soft wind blows,
To live more smoothly than mortals can, 20
To love and to reign as queen and wife,
To wear a crown that smells of a rose,
And still, with a sceptre as light as a fan,
Beat sweet time to the song of life.

V.

What is this ? As quick as a kiss
Falls the smile from her girlish mouth
The lion-people has left its lair,
Roaring along her garden of bliss,
And the fiery underworld of the South
Scorched a way to the upper air. 30

VI.

And a fire-stone ran in the form of a man,
Burningly, boundingly, fatal and fell,
Bowling the kingdom down ! Where was the
King ?
She had heard somewhat, since life began,
Of terrors on earth and horrors in hell,
But never, never of such a thing.

VII.

You think she dropped when her dream was stopped,
When the blotch of Bourbon blood inlay,
Lividly rank, her new lord's cheek ?
Not so. Her high heart overtopped 40
The royal part she had come to play.
Only the men in that hour were weak.

VIII.

And twice a wife by her ravaged life,
 And twice a queen by her kingdom lost,
 She braved the shock and the counter-shock
 Of hero and traitor, bullet and knife,
 While Italy pushed, like a vengeful ghost,
 That son of the Cursed from Gaeta's rock.

IX.

What will ye give her, who could not deliver,
 German Princesses ? A laurel wreath 50
 All over-scored with your signatures,
 Graces, Serenities, Highnesses ever ?
 Mock her not, fresh from the truth of Death,
 Conscious of dignities higher than yours.

X.

What will ye put in your casket shut,
 Ladies of Paris, in sympathy's name ?
 Guizot's daughter, what have you brought her ?
 Withered immortelles, long ago cut
 For guilty dynasties perished in shame,
 Putrid to memory, Guizot's daughter ? 60

XI.

Ah poor queen ! so young and serene !
 What shall we do for her, now hope's done,
 Standing at Rome in these ruins old,
 She too a ruin and no more a queen ?
 Leave her that diadem made by the sun
 Turning her hair to an innocent gold.

XII.

Ay ! bring close to her, as 'twere a rose, to her,
 Yon free child from an Apennine city
 Singing for Italy, — dumb in the place !
 Something like solace, let us suppose, to her 70
 Given, in that homage of wonder and pity,
 By his pure eyes to her beautiful face.

XIII.

Nature, excluded, savagely brooded ;
 Ruined all queendom and dogmas of state :
 Then, in reaction remorseful and mild,
 Rescues the womanhood, nearly eluded,
 Shows her what's sweetest in womanly fate —
 Sunshine from Heaven, and the eyes of a child.

THE NORTH AND THE SOUTH.

THE LAST POEM.

ROME, MAY, 1861.

I.

“ Now give us lands where the olives grow,”
 Cried the North to the South,
 “ Where the sun with a golden mouth can blow
 Blue bubbles of grapes down a vineyard row ! ”
 Cried the North to the South.

“ Now give us men from the sunless plain,”
 Cried the South to the North,
 “ By need of work in the snow and the rain,
 Made strong, and brave by familiar pain ! ”
 Cried the South to the North. 10

II.

“ Give lucider hills and intenser seas,”
 Said the North to the South,
 “ Since ever by symbols and bright degrees
 Art, childlike, climbs to the dear Lord’s knees,”
 Said the North to the South.

“ Give strenuous souls for belief and prayer,”
 Said the South to the North,
 “ That stand in the dark on the lowest stair,
 While affirming of God, ‘ He is certainly there,’ ”
 Said the South to the North. 20

III.

“ Yet oh, for the skies that are softer and higher ! ”
 Sighed the North to the South ;
 “ For the flowers that blaze, and the trees that aspire
 And the insects made of a song or a fire ! ”
 Sighed the North to the South.

“ And oh, for a seer to discern the same ! ”
 Sighed the South to the North ;
 “ For a poet’s tongue of baptismal flame,
 To call the tree or the flower by its name ! ”
 Sighed the South to the North. 30

IV.

The North sent therefore a man of men
 As a grace to the South ;
 And thus to Rome came Andersen.
 — “ *Alas, but must you take him again ?* ”
 Said the South to the North.

TRANSLATIONS.

PROMETHEUS BOUND.

FROM THE GREEK OF ÆSCHYLUS.

PREFACE.

ALTHOUGH, among the various versions which have appeared of various ancient writers, we may recognise the dead, together with much of the living letter ; a literal version, together with a transfusion of poetical spirit ; — why should we, on that account, consider ourselves charmed away from attempting another translation ? A mirror may be held in different lights by different hands ; and, according to the position of those hands, will the light fall. A picture may be imitated in different ways, — by steel engraving, or stone engraving ; and, according to the vocation of the artist, will the copy be. According to Dr. Bentley, Pope's translation of Homer is not Homer ; it is Spondanus : he might have said, it is not even Spondanus — it is Pope. Cowper's translation is a different Homer altogether ; not Spondanus, nor Pope, nor the right Homer either. We do not blame Pope and Cowper for not having faithfully represented Homer : we do not blame Pope and Cowper for being Pope and Cowper. It is the nature of the human mind to communicate its own character to whatever substance it conveys, whether it convey metaphysical impressions from itself to another mind, or literary compositions from one to another language. It is therefore desirable that the same composition

should be conveyed by different minds, that the character of the medium may not be necessarily associated with the thing conveyed. All men, since Æsop's time and before it, have worn various-coloured spectacles. They cannot part with their colour, which is their individuality ; but they may correct the effects of that individuality by itself. If Potter show us Æschylus through green spectacles, and another translator, though in a very inferior manner, show us Æschylus through yellow ones, it will become clear to the English reader, that green and yellow are not inherent properties of the Greek poet : and in this respect, both the English reader and the Greek poet are benefited.

But the present age says, it has no need of translations from classic authors. It is, or it would be, an original age : it will not borrow thoughts with long genealogies, nor walk upon a *pavé*, nor wear a costume, like Queen Anne's authors and the French dramatists. Its poetry shall not be cold and polished and imitative poetry ; but shall dream undreamt of dreams, and glow with an unearthly frenzy. If its dreams be noble dreams, may they be dreamt on ; if its frenzy be the evidence of inspiration, "may I," as Prometheus says, "be mad." But let the age take heed. — There is one step from dreaming nobly to sleeping inertly ; and one, from frenzy to imbecility.

I do not ask, I would not obtain, that our age should be servilely imitative of any former age. Surely it may think its own thoughts and speak its own words, yet not turn away from those who *have* thought and spoken well. The contemplation of excellence produces excellence, if not similar, yet parallel. We do not turn from green hills and waving forests,

because we build and inhabit palaces ; nor do we turn towards them, that we may model them in painted wax. We make them subjects of contemplation, in order to abstract from them those ideas of beauty, afterwards embodied in our own productions ; and, above all, in order to consider their and our Creator under every manifestation of His goodness and His power. All beauties, whether in nature or art, whether in physics or morals, whether in composition or abstract reasoning, are multiplied reflections, visible in different distances and under different positions, of one archetypal beauty. If we owe gratitude to Him, who created and unveiled its form, should we refuse to gaze upon those reflections ? Because they rest even upon heathen scrolls, should we turn away from those scrolls ? Because thorns and briers are the product of the earth, should we avert our eyes from that earth ? The mind of man and the earth of man are cursed alike.

But the age would not be “classical.” “O, that profaned name !” What does it mean, and what is it made to mean ? It does not mean what it is made to mean : it does not mean what is necessarily regular, and polished, and unimpassioned. The ancients, especially the ancient Greeks, felt, and thought, and wrote antecedently to rules : they felt passionately, and thought daringly ; and wrote because they felt and thought. Shakespeare is a more classical writer than Racine.

Perhaps, of all the authors of antiquity, no one stands so forward to support this hypothesis, as *Æschylus* : and of all the works of *Æschylus*, no one stands more forward to support it, than his work of the *Prometheus Bound*. He is a fearless and impetu-

ous, not a cautious and accomplished poet. His excellences could not be acquired by art, nor could his defects exist separately from genius. It would be nearly equally impossible for the mere imitator to compass either ; for if we would stand in the mist, we must stand also on the mountain. His excellences consist chiefly in a vehement imaginativeness, a strong but repressed sensibility, a high tone of morality, a fervency of devotion, and a rolling energetic diction : and as sometimes his fancy rushes in, where his judgment fears to tread, and language, even the most copious and powerful of languages, writhes beneath its impetuosity ; an occasional mixing of metaphor, and frequent obscurity of style, are named among his chief defects. He is pompous too, sometimes ; but his pomposity has not any modern, any rigid, frigid effect. When he walks, like his actors, on cothurni, we do not say "how stiff he is !" but "how majestic !"

Whether the Prometheus be, or be not, the finest production of its author, it will not, I think, be contested, that Prometheus himself is the character, in the conception and development of which, its author has concentrated his powers in the most full and efficient manner. There is more gorgeousness of imagery in the Seven Chiefs ; and more power in the Eumenides ; and I should tremble to oppose any one scene in Prometheus, to the Cassandra scene in Agamemnon. The learned Mr. Boyd, who, in addition to many valuable and well-known translations, has furnished the public with an able version of that obscure tragedy, considers the scene in question to be "unapproached and unapproachable by any rival." But I would rest the claims of the Prometheus upon one fulcrum, THE CONCEPTION OF CHARACTER. It is not

in the usual manner of Æschylus to produce upon his canvas any very prominent figure, to which every other is made subordinate, and to which the interest of the spectator is very strongly and almost exclusively attached. Agamemnon's *πληγὴν ἔχω* we do not feel within our hearts. In the Seven Chiefs, there is a clear division of interest; and the reader willingly agrees with Antigone, that Polynices should be as honorably buried as Eteocles. In the Supplices, we are called upon to exercise universal charity towards fifty heroines. In the Persæ, we cannot weep with Atossa over the misfortunes of Xerxes; not even over what she most femininely considers to be his greatest misfortune — *μάλιστα δ' ἦδε συμφορὰ δάκνει* — his wearing a tattered garment. Perhaps we know more of Orestes than of any personage, always excepting Prometheus, introduced by Æschylus: and yet both in the *Choëphoræ* and *Eumenides*, we are interested in his calamities, rather from their being calamities than from their being his. But Prometheus stands eminent and alone; one of the most original, and grand, and attaching characters ever conceived by the mind of man. That conception sank deeply into the soul of Milton, and, as has been observed, rose from thence in the likeness of his Satan. But the Satan of Milton and the Prometheus of Æschylus stand upon ground as unequal, as do the sublime of sin and the sublime of virtue. Satan suffered from his ambition; Prometheus from his humanity: Satan for himself; Prometheus for mankind: Satan dared perils which he had not weighed; Prometheus devoted himself to sorrows which he had foreknown. "Better to rule in hell," said Satan; "Better to serve this rock," said Prometheus. But in his hell, Satan yearned to associate with

man ; while Prometheus preferred a solitary agony : nay, he even permitted his zeal and tenderness for the peace of others, to abstract him from that agony's intensity.

Æschylus felt the force of his own portraiture : he never removes his Prometheus from the spectator's sight. The readers of Æschylus feel it : they are impatient at Io's long narrations ; not because those narrations are otherwise than beautiful, but because they would hear Prometheus speak again : they are impatient even at Prometheus's prophetic replies to Io, because they would hear him speak only of Prometheus. From the moment of the first dawning of his character upon their minds, its effect is electrifying. He is silent : he disdains as much to answer the impotent and selfish compassion of Vulcan, as to murmur beneath the brutal cruelty of Strength. It was not thus that *he* pitied in his days of joy : it was not thus that *he* acted in his days of power : and his spirit is above them, and recks not of them ; and when their pity and their scoffs pollute his ears no more, he pours out his impassioned sorrows to the air, and winds, and waters, and earth, and sun, whom he had never visited with benefits, and "taxed not with unkindness." The striking nature of these, our first ideas of Prometheus, is not enfeebled by any subsequent ones. We see him daring and unflinching beneath the torturing and dishonoring hand, yet keenly alive to the torture and dishonor ; for himself fearless and rash, yet for others considerate and wary ; himself unpitied, yet to others pitiful. And when, at the last, he calls no longer upon the sun, and earth, and waters, from whom the Avenger is secluding him ; but demands of Æther, who is rolling light to all eyes

excepting his, whether he beholds how he suffers by injustice ; — our hearts rise up within us, and bear witness that the suffering is indeed unjust.

It is apparent with what bitter feeling the conceiver of this character must have regarded the transferred praise and love of Athens — of his country. “Are you not ashamed,” said Menander to Philemon, “to conquer me in comedy ?” Such a reproach might Æschylus have used to his dramatic rival, and extracted as deep a blush as ever stained Philemon’s cheek. But he did not. Silent as his own Prometheus, he left for ever the Athens on whom he had conferred the immortality of his name and works ; and went to Sicily, to die. In that place of exile he wrote his epitaph instead of tragedies, calling with his dying voice on the grove of Marathon and the conquered Persians, as the only witnesses of his glory. “If thorns be in thy path,” said Marcus Antoninus, “turn aside.” But where should *he* turn, who would avoid the ingratitude and changefulness of man ?

Among those who have passed judgment upon Æschylus, it is remarkable how many have passed a similar one to that of the Athenians, when, according to Suidas, they “broke down the benches” previous to his departure for Sicily ; — a phrase interpreted by Scaliger to signify a final condemnation of his work. He is “*damn’d* by faint praise ;” by an alternate acknowledgment of his genius, and censure of his taste ; and by an invidious opposition to Sophocles and Euripides. Of the three great critics of antiquity, — Longinus, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and Quintilian, — Dionysius alone does not measure his criticism to twice the length of his commendation. Quintilian calls him “rudis in plerisque et incomposi-

tus," which my sense of justice almost gives me courage to call a false criticism. Longinus — Longinus ! ! uses similar language : — *ἐνίοτε μέντοι ἀκατεργαστοὺς καὶ οἰοῦναι ποκοειδεῖς τὰς ἐννοίας καὶ ἀμαλάντους φέροντας*. Now there are, undeniably, some things in Æschylus, which, like the expressions of Callisthenes, would properly fall under the censure of Longinus, as being *οὐχ ἐψηλὰ, ἀλλὰ μετέωρα*. But according to every principle by which he himself could urge his immortal claim upon posterity, the Homer of criticism should have named with less of coldness and more of rapture, the Homer of dramatic poetry.

With regard to the execution of this attempt, it is not necessary for me to say many words. I have rendered the iambics into blank verse, their nearest parallel ; and the choral odes and other lyric intermixtures, into English lyrics, irregular and rhymed. Irregularity I imagined to be indispensable to the conveyance of any part of the effect of the original measure, of which little seems to be understood by modern critics, than that it is irregular. To the literal sense I have endeavoured to bend myself as closely as was poetically possible : but if, after all, — and it is too surely the case, — “quantum mutatus !” must be applied ; may the reader say so rather sorrowfully than severely, and forgive my English for not being Greek, and myself for not being Æschylus.

And will Æschylus forgive, among my many other offences against him, the grave offence of profaning his Prometheus, by attaching to it some miscellaneous poems by its translator ? Will he not rather retort upon me, his chorus's strongly expressed disapprobation of *unequal unions* ? And how can I defend myself ? *ἀπόβλεμος ὁδε γ' ὁ πρόβλεμος*.

PROMETHEUS BOUND.

PERSONS.

PROMETHEUS.

OCEANUS.

HERMES.

HEPHÆSTUS.

Io, *daughter of Inachus.*

STRENGTH and FORCE.

Chorus of Sea Nymphs.

SCENE. — STRENGTH and FORCE, HEPHÆSTUS and PROMETHEUS, *at the Rocks.*

Strengtb. We reach the utmost limit of the earth,
 The Scythian track, the desert without man.
 And now, Hephæstus, thou must needs fulfil
 The mandate of our Father, and with links
 Indissoluble of adamantine chains
 Fasten against this beetling precipice
 This guilty god. Because he filched away
 Thine own bright flower, the glory of plastic fire,
 And gifted mortals with it, — such a sin
 It doth behove he expiate to the gods, 10
 Learning to accept the empery of Zeus
 And leave off his old trick of loving man.

Hephæstus. O Strength and Force, for you, our
 Zeus's will
 Presents a deed for doing, no more ! — but I,
 I lack your daring, up this storm-rent chasm
 To fix with violent hands a kindred god,
 Howbeit necessity compels me so
 That I must dare it, and our Zeus commands
 With a most inevitable word. Ho, thou !

High-thoughted son of Themis who is sage ! 20
 Thee loth, I loth must rivet fast in chains
 Against this rocky height unclomb by man,
 Where never human voice nor face shall find
 Out thee who lov'st them, and thy beauty's flower,
 Scorched in the sun's clear heat, shall fade away.
 Night shall come up with garniture of stars
 To comfort thee with shadow, and the sun
 Disperse with retriect beams the morning-frosts,
 But through all changes sense of present woe
 Shall vex thee sore, because with none of them 30
 There comes a hand to free. Such fruit is plucked
 From love of man ! and in that thou, a god,
 Didst brave the wrath of gods and give away
 Undue respect to mortals, for that crime
 Thou art adjudged to guard this joyless rock,
 Erect, unslumbering, bending not the knee,
 And many a cry and unavailing moan
 To utter on the air. For Zeus is stern,
 And new-made kings are cruel.

Strength. Be it so.
 Why loiter in vain pity ? Why not hate 40
 A god the gods hate ? one too who betrayed
 Thy glory unto men ?

Hephaestus An awful thing
 Is kinship joined to friendship.

Strength. Grant it be ;
 Is disobedience to the Father's word
 A possible thing ? Dost quail not more for that ?

Hephaestus. Thou at least, art a stern one : ever
 bold.

Strength. Why, if I wept, it were no remedy ;
 And do not *thou* spend labour on the air
 To bootless uses.

Hephæstus. Cursed handicraft !
 I curse and hate thee, O my craft !
Strength. Why hate 50
 Thy craft most plainly innocent of all
 These pending ills ?
Hephæstus. I would some other hand
 Were here to work it !
Strength. All work hath its pain,
 Except to rule the gods. There is none free
 Except King Zeus.
Hephæstus. I know it very well :
 I argue not against it.
Strength. Why not, then,
 Make haste and lock the fetters over HIM
 Lest Zeus behold thee lagging ?
Hephæstus. Here be chains.
 Zeus may behold these.
Strength. Seize him : strike amain :
 Strike with the hammer on each side his hands — 60
 Rivet him to the rock.
Hephæstus. The work is done,
 And thoroughly done.
Strength. Still faster grapple him ;
 Wedge him in deeper : leave no inch to stir.
 He's terrible for finding a way out
 From the irremediable.
Hephæstus. Here's an arm, at least,
 Grappled past freeing.
Strength. Now then, buckle me
 The other securely. Let this wise one learn
 He's duller than our Zeus.
Hephæstus. Oh, none but he
 Accuse me justly.
Strength. Now, straight through the chest,

Take him and bite him with the clenching tooth 70
Of the adamantine wedge, and rivet him.

Hephæstus. Alas, Prometheus, what thou sufferest
here

I sorrow over.

Strength. Dost thou flinch again
And breathe groans for the enemies of Zeus?
Beware lest thine own pity find thee out.

Hephæstus. Thou dost behold a spectacle that
turns

The sight o' the eyes to pity.

Strength. I behold
A sinner suffer his sin's penalty.
But lash the thongs about his sides.

Hephæstus. So much,
I must do. Urge no farther than I must. 80

Strength. Ay, but I *will* urge! — and, with shout
on shout,

Will hound thee at this quarry. Get thee down
And ring amain the iron round his legs.

Hephæstus. That work was not long doing.

Strength. Heavily now
Let fall the strokes upon the perforant gyves:
For He who rates the work has a heavy hand.

Hephæstus. Thy speech is savage as thy shape.

Strength. Be thou
Gentle and tender! but revile not me
For the firm will and the untruckling hate.

Hephæstus. Let us go. He is netted round with
chains. 90

Strength. Here, now, taunt on! and having
spoiled the gods

Of honours, crown withal thy mortal men

Who live a whole day out. Why how could *they*

Draw off from thee one single of thy griefs ?
 Methinks the Dæmons gave thee a wrong name,
 "Prometheus," which means Providence, — because
 Thou dost thyself need providence to see
 Thy roll and ruin from the top of doom.

Prometheus (alone). O holy Æther, and swift-
 wingèd Winds,

And River-wells, and laughter innumerable 100
 Of yon sea-waves ! Earth, mother of us all,
 And all-viewing cyclic Sun, I cry on you, —
 Behold me, a god, what I endure from gods !

Behold, with throe on throe,
 How, wasted by this woe,
 I wrestle down the myriad years of time !
 Behold, how fast around me,
 The new King of the happy ones sublime
 Has flung the chain he forged, has shamed and bound
 me ! 109

Woe, woe ! to-day's woe and the coming morrow's
 I cover with one groan. And where is found me
 A limit to these sorrows ?

And yet what word do I say ? I have foreknown
 Clearly all things that should be ; nothing done
 Comes sudden to my soul ; and I must bear
 What is ordained with patience, being aware

Necessity doth front the universe
 With an invincible gesture. Yet this curse
 Which strikes me now, I find it hard to brave
 In silence or in speech. Because I gave 120
 Honour to mortals, I have yoked my soul
 To this compelling fate. Because I stole
 The secret fount of fire, whose bubbles went
 Over the ferule's brim, and manward sent
 Art's mighty means and perfect rudiment,

That sin I expiate in this agony,
 Hung here in fetters, 'neath the blanching sky.
 Ah, ah me ! what a sound,
 What a fragrance sweeps up from a pinion unseen
 Of a god, or a mortal, or nature between, 130
 Sweeping up to this rock where the earth has her
 bound,
 To have sight of my pangs or some guerdon obtain.
 Lo, a god in the anguish, a god in the chain !
 The god, Zeus hateth sore
 And his gods hate again,
 As many as tread on his glorified floor,
 Because I loved mortals too much evermore.
 Alas me ! what a murmur and motion I hear,
 As of birds flying near !
 And the air undersings 140
 The light stroke of their wings —
 And all life that approaches I wait for in fear.

Chorus of Sea Nymphs, 1st Strophe.

Fear nothing ! our troop
 Floats lovingly up
 With a quick-oaring stroke
 Of wings steered to the rock,
 Having softened the soul of our father below.
 For the gales of swift-bearing have sent me a sound,
 And the clank of the iron, the malleted blow,
 Smote down the profound 150
 Of my caverns of old,
 And struck the red light in a blush from my brow, —
 Till I sprang up unsandaled, in haste to behold,
 And rushed forth on my chariot of wings manifold.

Prometheus. Alas me ! — alas me !
Ye offspring of Tethys who bore at her breast
Many children, and eke of Oceanus, he
Coiling still around earth with perpetual unrest !
Behold me and see
How transfix'd with the fang
Of a fetter I hang
On the high-jutting rocks of this fissure and keep
An uncoveted watch o'er the world and the deep.

Chorus, 1st Antistrophe.

I behold thee, Prometheus ; yet now, yet now,
A terrible cloud whose rain is tears
Sweeps over mine eyes that witness how
Thy body appears
Hung awaste on the rocks by infrangible chains :
For new is the Hand, new the rudder that steers
The ship of Olympus through surge and wind — 170
And of old things passed, no track is behind.

Prometheus. Under earth, under Hades
Where the home of the shade is,
All into the deep, deep Tartarus,
I would he had hurled me adown.
I would he had plunged me, fastened thus
In the knotted chain with the savage clang,
All into the dark where there should be none,
Neither god nor another, to laugh and see. 179
But now the winds sing through and shake
The hurtling chains wherein I hang,
And I, in my naked sorrows, make
Much mirth for my enemy.

Chorus, 2nd Strophe.

Nay ! who of the gods hath a heart so stern
 As to use thy woe for a mock and mirth ?
 Who would not turn more mild to learn
 Thy sorrows ? who of the heaven and earth
 Save Zeus ? But he
 Right wrathfully
 Bears on his sceptral soul unbent 190
 And rules thereby the heavenly seed,
 Nor will he pause till he content
 His thirsty heart in a finished deed ;
 Or till Another shall appear,
 To win by fraud, to seize by fear
 The hard-to-be-captured government.

Prometheus. Yet even of *me* he shall have need,
 That monarch of the blessed seed,
 Of me, of me, who now am cursed
 By his fetters dire, — 200
 To wring my secret out withal
 And learn by whom his sceptre shall
 Be filched from him — as was, at first,
 His heavenly fire.
 But he never shall enchant me
 With his honey-lipped persuasion ;
 Never, never shall he daunt me
 With the oath and threat of passion
 Into speaking as they want me,
 Till he loose this savage chain, 210
 And accept the expiation
 Of my sorrow, in his pain.

Chorus, 2nd Antistrophe.

Thou art, sooth, a brave god,
 And, for all thou hast borne
 From the stroke of the rod,
 Nought relaxest from scorn.
 But thou speakest unto me
 Too free and unworn ;
 And a terror strikes through me
 And festers my soul 220
 And I fear, in the roll
 Of the storm, for thy fate
 In the ship far from shore :
 Since the son of Saturnus is hard in his hate
 And unmoved in his heart evermore.

Prometheus. I know that Zeus is stern ;
 I know he metes his justice by his will ;
 And yet, his soul shall learn
 More softness when once broken by this ill :
 And curbing his unconquerable vaunt 230
 He shall rush on in fear to meet with me
 Who rush to meet with him in agony,
 To issues of harmonious covenant.

Chorus. Remove the veil from all things and relate
 The story to us, — of what crime accused,
 Zeus smites thee with dishonourable pangs.
 Speak : if to teach us do not grieve thyself.

Prometheus. The utterance of these things is torture to me,
 But so, too, is their silence ; each way lies
 Woe strong as fate.

When gods began with wrath, 240
 And war rose up between their starry brows,

Some choosing to cast Chronos from his throne
 That Zeus might king it there, and some in haste
 With opposite oaths that they would have no Zeus
 To rule the gods for ever, — I, who brought
 The counsel I thought meetest, could not move
 The Titans, children of the Heaven and Earth,
 What time, disdaining in their rugged souls
 My subtle machinations, they assumed
 It was an easy thing for force to take 250
 The mastery of fate. My mother, then,
 Who is called not only Themis but Earth too,
 (Her single beauty joys in many names)
 Did teach me with reiterant prophecy
 What future should be, and how conquering gods
 Should not prevail by strength and violence
 But by guile only. When I told them so,
 They would not deign to contemplate the truth
 On all sides round ; whereat I deemed it best
 To lead my willing mother upwardly 260
 And set my Themis face to face with Zeus
 As willing to receive her. Tartarus,
 With its abysmal cloister of the Dark,
 Because I gave that counsel, covers up
 The antique Chronos and his siding hosts,
 And, by that counsel helped, the king of gods
 Hath recompensed me with these bitter pangs :
 For kingship wears a cancer at the heart, —
 Distrust in friendship. Do ye also ask
 What crime it is for which he tortures me ? 270
 That shall be clear before you. When at first
 He filled his father's throne, he instantly
 Made various gifts of glory to the gods
 And dealt the empire out. Alone of men,
 Of miserable men, he took no count,

But yearned to sweep their track off from the world
 And plant a newer race there. Not a god
 Resisted such desire except myself.
I dared it ! I drew mortals back to light,
From meditated ruin deep as hell ! 280
 For which wrong, I am bent down in these pangs
 Dreadful to suffer, mournful to behold,
 And I, who pitied man, am thought myself
 Unworthy of pity ; while I render out
 Deep rhythms of anguish 'neath the harping hand
 That strikes me thus — a sight to shame your Zeus !

Chorus. Hard as thy chains and cold as all these
 rocks

Is he, Prometheus, who withholds his heart
 From joining in thy woe. I yearned before
 To fly this sight ; and, now I gaze on it, 290
 I sicken inwards.

Prometheus. To my friends, indeed,
 I must be a sad sight.

Chorus. And didst thou sin
 No more than so ?

Prometheus. I did restrain besides
 My mortals from premeditating death.

Chorus. How didst thou medicine the plague-fear
 of death ?

Prometheus. I set blind Hopes to inhabit in their
 house.

Chorus. By that gift thou didst help thy mortals
 well.

Prometheus. I gave them also fire.

Chorus. And have they now,
 Those creatures of a day, the red-eyed fire ?

Prometheus. They have : and shall learn by it
 many arts. 300

Chorus. And truly for such sins Zeus tortures thee

And will remit no anguish ? Is there set
No limit before thee to thine agony ?

Prometheus. No other : only what seems good to HIM.

Chorus. And how will it seem good ? what hope remains ?

Seest thou not that thou hast sinned ? But that thou hast sinned

It glads me not to speak of, and grieves thee :
Then let it pass from both, and seek thyself
Some outlet from distress.

Prometheus. It is in truth

An easy thing to stand aloof from pain 310

And lavish exhortation and advice

On one vexed sorely by it. I have known

All in prevision. By my choice, my choice,

I freely sinned — I will confess my sin —

And helping mortals, found my own despair.

I did not think indeed that I should pine

Beneath such pangs against such skyey rocks,

Doomed to this drear hill and no neighbouring

Of any life : but mourn not ye for griefs

I bear to-day : hear rather, drooping down 320

To the plain, how other woes creep on to me,

And learn the consummation of my doom.

Beseech you, nymphs, beseech you, grieve for me

Who now am grieving ; for Grief walks the earth,

And sits down at the foot of each by turns.

Chorus. We hear the deep clash of thy words,

Prometheus, and obey.

And I spring with a rapid foot away

From the rushing car and the holy air,

PROMETHEUS BOUND.

101

The track of birds ;
And I drop to the rugged ground and there
Await the tale of thy despair. 330

OCEANUS enters.

Oceanus. I reach the bourn of my weary road,
Where I may see and answer thee,
Prometheus, in thine agony.
On the back of the quick-winged bird I glode,
And I bridled him in
With the will of a god.
Behold, thy sorrow aches in me
Constrained by the force of kin. 340
Nay, though that tie were all undone,
For the life of none beneath the sun
Would I seek a larger benison
Than I seek for thine.
And thou shalt learn my words are truth, —
That no fair parlance of the mouth
Grows falsely out of mine.
Now give me a deed to prove my faith ;
For no faster friend is named in breath
Than I, Oceanus, am thine. 350
Prometheus. Ha ! what has brought thee ? Hast
thou also come

To look upon my woe ? How hast thou dared
To leave the depths called after thee, the caves
Self-hewn and self-roofed with spontaneous rock,
To visit earth, the mother of my chain ?
Hast come indeed to view my doom and mourn
That I should sorrow thus ? Gaze on, and see
How I, the fast friend of your Zeus, — how I
The erector of the empire in his hand,
Am bent beneath that hand, in this despair. 360

Oceanus. Prometheus, I behold : and I would fain
 Exhort thee, though already subtle enough,
 To a better wisdom. Titan, know thyself,
 And take new softness to thy manners since
 A new king rules the gods. If words like these,
 Harsh words and trenchant, thou wilt fling abroad,
 Zeus haply, though he sit so far and high,
 May hear thee do it, and so, this wrath of his
 Which now affects thee fiercely, shall appear 369
 A mere child's sport at vengeance. Wretched god,
 Rather dismiss the passion which thou hast,
 And seek a change from grief. Perhaps I seem
 To address thee with old saws and outworn sense, —
 Yet such a curse, Prometheus, surely waits
 On lips that speak too proudly : thou, meantime,
 Art none the meeker, nor dost yield a jot
 To evil circumstance, preparing still
 To swell the account of grief with other griefs
 Than what are borne. Beseech thee, use me then
 For counsel : do not spurn against the pricks, — 380
 Seeing that who reigns, reigns by cruelty
 Instead of right. And now, I go from hence,
 And will endeavour if a power of mine
 Can break thy fetters through. For thee, — be calm,
 And smooth thy words from passion. Knowest thou
 not
 Of perfect knowledge, thou who knowest too much,
 That where the tongue wags, ruin never lags ?

Prometheus, I gratulate thee who hast shared and
 dared
 All things with me, except their penalty.
 Enough so ! leave these thoughts. It cannot be 390
 That thou shouldst move Him. He may *not* be
 moved ;

And *thus*, beware of sorrow on this road.

Oceanus. Ay ! ever wiser for another's use
Than thine ! the event, and not the prophecy,
Attests it to me. Yet where now I rush,
Thy wisdom hath no power to drag me back ;
Because I glory, glory, to go hence
And win for thee deliverance from thy pangs,
As a free gift from Zeus.

Prometheus. Why there, again,
I give thee gratulation and applause. 400
Thou lackest no goodwill. But, as for deeds,
Do nought ! 'twere all done vainly ; helping nought,
Whatever thou wouldst do. Rather take rest
And keep thyself from evil. If I grieve,
I do not therefore wish to multiply
The griefs of others. Verily, not so !
For still my brother's doom doth vex my soul, —
My brother Atlas, standing in the west,
Shouldering the column of the heaven and earth,
A difficult burden ! I have also seen, 410
And pitied as I saw, the earth-born one,
The inhabitant of old Cilician caves,
The great war-monster of the hundred heads,
(All taken and bowed beneath the violent Hand,)
Typhon the fierce, who did resist the gods,
And, hissing slaughter from his dreadful jaws,
Flash out ferocious glory from his eyes
As if to storm the throne of Zeus. Whereat,
The sleepless arrow of Zeus flew straight at him
The headlong bolt of thunder breathing flame, 420
And struck him downward from his eminence
Of exultation ; through the very soul,
It struck him, and his strength was withered up
To ashes, thunder-blasted. Now he lies

A helpless trunk supinely, at full length
 Beside the strait of ocean, spurred into
 By roots of Ætna ; high upon whose tops
 Hephæstus sits and strikes the flashing ore.
 From thence the rivers of fire shall burst away
 Hereafter, and devour with savage jaws 430
 The equal plains of fruitful Sicily,
 Such passion he shall boil back in hot darts
 Of an insatiate fury and sough of flame,
 Fallen Typhon, — howsoever struck and charred
 By Zeus's bolted thunder. But for thee,
 Thou art not so unlearned as to need
 My teaching — let thy knowledge save thyself.
 I quaff the full cup of a present doom,
 And wait till Zeus hath quenched his will in wrath.
Oceanus. Prometheus, art thou ignorant of this,
 That words do medicine anger ?

Prometheus. If the word 441
 With seasonable softness touch the soul
 And, where the parts are ulcerous, sear them not
 By any rudeness.

Oceanus. With a noble aim
 To dare as nobly — is there harm in *that* ?
 Dost thou discern it ? Teach me.

Prometheus. I discern
 Vain aspiration, unresultive work.

Oceanus. Then suffer me to bear the brunt of
 this !

Since it is profitable that one who is wise
 Should seem not wise at all.

Prometheus. And such would seem 450
 My very crime.

Oceanus. In truth thine argument
 Sends me back home.

Prometheus. Lest any lament for me
Should cast thee down to hate.

Oceanus. The hate of him
Who sits a new king on the absolute throne ?

Prometheus. Beware of him, lest thine heart
grieve by him.

Oceanus. Thy doom, Prometheus, be my
teacher !

Prometheus. Go.
Depart — beware — and keep the mind thou hast.

Oceanus. Thy words drive after, as I rush before.
Lo ! my four-footed bird sweeps smooth and wide
The flats of air with balanced pinions, glad 460
To bend his knee at home in the ocean-stall.

[OCEANUS *departs.*

Chorus, 1st Strophe.

I moan thy fate, I moan for thee,
Prometheus ! From my eyes too tender,
Drop after drop incessantly
The tears of my heart's pity render
My cheeks wet from their fountains free ;
Because that Zeus, the stern and cold,
Whose law is taken from his breast,
Uplifts his sceptre manifest
Over the gods of old. 470

1st Antistrophe.

All the land is moaning
With a murmured plaint to-day ;
All the mortal nations
Having habitations
In the holy Asia

480

Mourn the maids inhabitant
Of the Colchian land,
Who with white, calm bosoms stand
In the battle's roar :
Mourn the Scythian tribes that haunt
The verge of earth, Mæotis' shore.

490

499

And black Hades roars up through the chasm of the
ground,

And the fountains of pure-running rivers moan low
In a pathos of woe.

Prometheus. Beseech you, think not I am silent
thus

Through pride or scorn. I only gnaw my heart
With meditation, seeing myself so wronged.
For see — their honours to these new-made gods,
What other gave but I, and dealt them out
With distribution? Ay — but here I am dumb! 510
For here, I should repeat your knowledge to you,
If I spake aught. List rather to the deeds
I did for mortals; how, being fools before,
I made them wise and true in aim of soul.
And let me tell you — not as taunting men,
But teaching you the intention of my gifts,
How, first beholding, they beheld in vain,
And hearing, heard not, but, like shapes in dreams,
Mixed all things wildly down the tedious time,
Nor knew to build a house against the sun 520
With wickered sides, nor any woodcraft knew,
But lived, like silly ants, beneath the ground
In hollow caves unsunned. There, came to them
No steadfast sign of winter, nor of spring
Flower-perfumed, nor of summer full of fruit,
But blindly and lawlessly they did all things,
Until I taught them how the stars do rise
And set in mystery, and devised for them
Number, the inducer of philosophies,
The synthesis of Letters, and, beside, 530
The artificer of all things, Memory,
That sweet Muse-mother. I was first to yoke

The servile beasts in couples, carrying
 An heirdom of man's burdens on their backs.
 I joined to chariots, steeds, that love the bit
 They champ at — the chief pomp of golden ease.
 And none but I originated ships,
 The seaman's chariots, wandering on the brine
 With linen wings. And I — oh, miserable ! —
 Who did devise for mortals all these arts, 540
 Have no device left now to save myself
 From the woe I suffer.

Chorus. Most unseemly woe
 Thou sufferest, and dost stagger from the sense
 Bewildered ! like a bad leech falling sick
 Thou art faint at soul, and canst not find the drugs
 Required to save thyself.

Prometheus. Harken the rest,
 And marvel further, what more arts and means
 I did invent, — this, greatest : if a man
 Fell sick, there was no cure, nor esculent
 Nor chrism nor liquid, but for lack of drugs 550
 Men pined and wasted, till I showed them all
 Those mixtures of emollient remedies
 Whereby they might be rescued from disease.
 I fixed the various rules of mantic art,
 Discerned the vision from the common dream,
 Instructed them in vocal auguries
 Hard to interpret, and defined as plain
 The wayside omens, — flights of crook-clawed birds, —
 Showed which are, by their nature, fortunate,
 And which not so, and what the food of each, 560
 And what the hates, affections, social needs,
 Of all to one another, — taught what sign
 Of visceral lightness, coloured to a shade,
 May charm the genial gods, and what fair spots

Commend the lung and liver. Burning so
 The limbs encased in fat, and the long chine,
 I led my mortals on to an art abstruse,
 And cleared their eyes to the image in the fire,
 Erst filmed in dark. Enough said now of this.
 For the other helps of man hid underground, 570
 The iron and the brass, silver and gold,
 Can any dare affirm he found them out
 Before me ? none, I know ! unless he choose
 To lie in his vaunt. In one word learn the whole, —
 That all arts came to mortals from Prometheus.

Chorus. Give mortals now no inexpedient help,
 Neglecting thine own sorrow. I have hope still
 To see thee, breaking from the fetter here,
 Stand up as strong as Zeus.

Prometheus. This ends not thus,
 The oracular fate ordains. I must be bowed 580
 By infinite woes and pangs, to escape this chain.
 Necessity is stronger than mine art.

Chorus. Who holds the helm of that Necessity ?

Prometheus. The threefold Fates and the unforgetting Furies.

Chorus. Is Zeus less absolute than these are ?

Prometheus. Yea,
 And therefore cannot fly what is ordained.

Chorus. What is ordained for Zeus, except to be
 A king for ever ?

Prometheus. 'Tis too early yet
 For thee to learn it : ask no more.

Chorus. Perhaps
 Thy secret may be something holy ?

Prometheus. Turn 590
 To another matter : this, it is not time
 To speak abroad, but utterly to veil

In silence. For by that same secret kept,
I 'scape this chain's dishonour and its woe.

Chorus, 1st Strophe.

Never, oh never
May Zeus, the all-giver,
Wrestle down from his throne
In that might of his own
To antagonise mine !
Nor let me delay 600
As I bend on my way
Toward the gods of the shrine
Where the altar is full
Of the blood of the bull,
Near the tossing brine
Of Ocean my father.
May no sin be sped in the word that is said,
But my vow be rather
Consummated,
Nor evermore fail, nor evermore pine. 610

1st Antistrophe.

'Tis sweet to have
Life lengthened out
With hopes proved brave
By the very doubt,
Till the spirit enfold
Those manifest joys which were foretold.
But I thrill to behold
Thee, victim doomed,
By the countless cares
And the drear despairs 620
Forever consumed, —

And all because thou, who art fearless now
 Of Zeus above,
 Didst overflow for mankind below
 With a free-souled, reverent love.
 Ah friend, behold and see !
 What's all the beauty of humanity ?
 Can it be fair ?
 What's all the strength ? is it strong ?
 And what hope can they bear, 630
 These dying livers — living one day long ?
 Ah, seest thou not, my friend,
 How feeble and slow
 And like a dream, doth go
 This poor blind manhood, drifted from its end ?
 And how no mortal wranglings can confuse
 The harmony of Zeus ?

Prometheus, I have learnt these things
 From the sorrow in thy face.
 Another song did fold its wings 640
 Upon my lips in other days,
 When round the bath and round the bed
 The hymeneal chant instead
 I sang for thee, and smiled, —
 And thou didst lead, with gifts and vows,
 Hesione, my father's child,
 To be thy wedded spouse.

Io enters.

Io. What land is this ? what people is here ?
 And who is he that writhes, I see,
 In the rock-hung chain ? 650
 Now what is the crime that hath brought thee to pain ?

Now what is the land — make answer free —
Which I wander through, in my wrong and fear ?

Ah ! ah ! ah me !

The gad-fly stingeth to agony !
O Earth, keep off that phantasm pale
Of earth-born Argus ! — ah ! — I quail

When my soul descries

That herdsman with the myriad eyes
Which seem, as he comes, one crafty eye. 660
Graves hide him not, though he should die,
But he doggeth me in my misery
From the roots of death, on high — on high —
And along the sands of the siding deep,
All famine-worn, he follows me,
And his waxen reed doth undersound
The waters round
And giveth a measure that giveth sleep.

Woe, woe, woe !

Where shall my weary course be done ? 670
What wouldst thou with me, Saturn's son ?
And in what have I sinned, that I should go
Thus yoked to grief by thine hand for ever ?

Ah ! ah ! dost vex me so

That I madden and shiver

Stung through with dread ?

Flash the fire down to burn me !

Heave the earth up to cover me !

Plunge me in the deep, with the salt waves over me,
That the sea-beasts may be fed ! 680
O king, do not spurn me

In my prayer !

For this wandering, everlonger, evermore,
Hath overworn me,

And I know not on what shore
I may rest from my despair.

Chorus. Hearest thou what the ox-horned maiden
saith ?

Prometheus. How could I choose but hearken
what she saith,

The phrensied maiden ? — Inachus's child ? —
Who love-warms Zeus's heart, and now is lashed 690
By Herè's hate along the unending ways ?

Io. Who taught thee to articulate that name, —
My father's ? Speak to his child
By grief and shame defiled !

Who art thou, victim, thou who dost acclaim
Mine anguish in true words on the wide air,
And callest too by name the curse that came

From Herè unaware,

To waste and pierce me with its maddening goad ?

Ah — ah — I leap 700

With the pang of the hungry — I bound on the road —

I am driven by my doom —

I am overcome

By the wrath of an enemy strong and deep !

Are any of those who have tasted pain,

Alas ! as wretched as I ?

Now tell me plain, doth aught remain

For my soul to endure beneath the sky ?

Is there any help to be holpen by ?

If knowledge be in thee, let it be said !

710

Cry aloud — cry

To the wandering, woeful maid !

Prometheus. Whatever thou wouldst learn I will declare, —

No riddle upon my lips, but such straight words
As friends should use to each other when they talk.
Thou seest Prometheus, who gave mortals fire.

Io. O common Help of all men, known of all,
O miserable Prometheus, — for what cause
Dost thou endure thus ?

Prometheus. I have done with wail
For my own griefs, but lately.

Io. Wilt thou not 720
Vouchsafe the boon to me ?

Prometheus. Say what thou wilt,
For I vouchsafe all.

Io. Speak then, and reveal
Who shut thee in this chasm.

Prometheus. The will of Zeus,
The hand of his Hephæstus.

Io. And what crime
Dost expiate so ?

Prometheus. Enough for thee I have told
In so much only.

Io. Nay, but show besides
The limit of my wandering, and the time
Which yet is lacking to fulfil my grief.

Prometheus. Why, not to know were better than
to know
For such as thou.

Io. Beseech thee, blind me not 730
To that which I must suffer.

Prometheus. If I do,
The reason is not that I grudge a boon.

Io. What reason, then, prevents thy speaking
out ?

Prometheus. No grudging ; but a fear to break
thine heart.

Io. Less care for me, I pray thee. Certainty
I count for advantage.

Prometheus. Thou wilt have it so,
And therefore I must speak. Now hear —

Chorus. Not yet.

Give half the guerdon my way. Let us learn
First, what the curse is that befell the maid, —
Her own voice telling her own wasting woes : 740
The sequence of that anguish shall await
The teaching of thy lips.

Prometheus. It doth behove
That thou, Maid *Io*, shouldst vouchsafe to these
The grace they pray, — the more, because they are
called

Thy father's sisters : since to open out
And mourn out grief where it is possible
To draw a tear from the audience, is a work
That pays its own price well.

Io. I cannot choose
But trust you, nymphs, and tell you all ye ask,
In clear words — though I sob amid my speech 750
In speaking of the storm-curse sent from *Zeus*,
And of my beauty, from what height it took
Its swoop on me, poor wretch ! left thus deformed
And monstrous to your eyes. For evermore
Around my virgin-chamber, wandering went
The nightly visions which entreated me
With syllabled smooth sweetness. — “ Blessed maid,
Why lengthen out thy maiden hours when fate
Permits the noblest spousal in the world ?
When *Zeus* burns with the arrow of thy love 760
And fain would touch thy beauty ? — Maiden, thou

Despise not Zeus ! depart to Lerné's mead
 That's green around thy father's flocks and stalls,
 Until the passion of the heavenly Eye
 Be quenched in sight." Such dreams did all night
 long

Constrain me — me, unhappy ! — till I dared
 To tell my father how they trod the dark
 With visionary steps. Whereat he sent
 His frequent heralds to the Pythian fane,
 And also to Dodona, and inquired 770
 How best, by act or speech, to please the gods.
 The same returning brought back oracles
 Of doubtful sense, indefinite response,
 Dark to interpret ; but at last there came
 To Inachus an answer that was clear,
 Thrown straight as any bolt, and spoken out —
 This — " he should drive me from my home and land,
 And bid me wander to the extreme verge
 Of all the earth — or, if he willed it not,
 Should have a thunder with a fiery eye 780
 Leap straight from Zeus to burn up all his race
 To the last root of it." By which Loxian word
 Subdued, he drove me forth and shut me out,
 He loth, me loth, — but Zeus's violent bit
 Compelled him to the deed : when instantly
 My body and soul were changèd and distraught,
 And, hornèd as ye see, and spurred along
 By the fanged insect, with a maniac leap
 I rushed on to Cenchrea's limpid stream 789
 And Lerné's fountain-water. There, the earth-born,
 The herdsman Argus, most immitigable
 Of wrath, did find me out, and track me out
 With countless eyes set staring at my steps :
 And though an unexpected sudden doom

Drew him from life, I, curse-tormented still,
 Am driven from land to land before the scourge
 The gods hold o'er me. So thou hast heard the past,
 And if a bitter future thou canst tell,
 Speak on. I charge thee, do not flatter me
 Through pity, with false words ; for, in my mind, 800
 Deceiving works more shame than torturing doth.

Chorus.

Ah ! silence here !
 Nevermore, nevermore
 Would I languish for
 The stranger's word
 To thrill in mine ear —
 Nevermore for the wrong and the woe and the
 fear
 So hard to behold,
 So cruel to bear,
 Piercing my soul with a double-edged sword 810
 Of a sliding cold.
 Ah Fate ! ah me !
 I shudder to see
 This wandering maid in her agony.

Prometheus. Grief is too quick in thee and fear
 too full :

Be patient till thou hast learnt the rest.

Chorus.

Speak : teach.

To those who are sad already, it seems sweet,
 By clear foreknowledge to make perfect, pain.

Prometheus. The boon ye asked me first was
 lightly won, —
 For first ye asked the story of this maid's grief 820

As her own lips might tell it. Now remains
To list what other sorrows she so young
Must bear from Herè. Inachus's child,
O thou ! drop down thy soul my weighty words,
And measure out the landmarks which are set
To end thy wandering. Toward the orient sun
First turn thy face from mine and journey on
Along the desert flats till thou shalt come
Where Scythia's shepherd peoples dwell aloft,
Perched in wheeled waggons under woven roofs, 830
And twang the rapid arrow past the bow —
Approach them not ; but siding in thy course
The rugged shore-rocks resonant to the sea,
Depart that country. On the left hand dwell
The iron-workers, called the Chalybes,
Of whom beware, for certes they are uncouth
And nowise bland to strangers. Reaching so
The stream Hybristes (well the *scorner* called),
Attempt no passage, — it is hard to pass, —
Or ere thou come to Caucasus itself, 840
That highest of mountains, where the river leaps
The precipice in his strength. Thou must toil up
Those mountain-tops that neighbour with the stars,
And tread the south way, and draw near, at last,
The Amazonian host that hateth man,
Inhabitants of Themiscyra, close
Upon Thermodon, where the sea's rough jaw
Doth gnash at Salmydessa and provide
A cruel host to seamen, and to ships 850
A stepdame. They with unreluctant hand
Shall lead thee on and on, till thou arrive
Just where the ocean-gates show narrowest
On the Cimmerian isthmus. Leaving which,
Behoves thee swim with fortitude of soul

The strait Mæotis. Ay, and evermore
 That traverse shall be famous on men's lips,
 That strait, called Bosphorus, the horned-one's road,
 So named because of thee, who so wilt pass
 From Europe's plain to Asia's continent. 859
 How think ye, nymphs ? the king of gods appears
 Impartial in ferocious deeds ? Behold !
 The god desirous of this mortal's love
 Hath cursed her with these wanderings. Ah, fair
 child,
 Thou hast met a bitter groom for bridal troth !
 For all thou yet hast heard can only prove
 The incompleated prelude of thy doom.

Io. Ah, ah !

Prometheus. Is't thy turn, now, to shriek and
 moan ?

How wilt thou, when thou hast hearkend what
 remains ?

Chorus. Besides the grief thou hast told can aught
 remain ?

Prometheus. A sea — of foredoomed evil worked
 to storm. 870

Io. What boots my life, then ? why not cast my-
 self

Down headlong from this miserable rock,
 That, dashed against the flats, I may redeem
 My soul from sorrow ? Better once to die
 Than day by day to suffer.

Prometheus. Verily,

It would be hard for thee to bear my woe
 For whom it is appointed not to die.
 Death frees from woe : but I before me see
 In all my far prevision not a bound
 To all I suffer, ere that Zeus shall fall 880

From being a king.

Io. And can it ever be
That Zeus shall fall from empire ?

Prometheus. *Thou*, methinks,
Wouldst take some joy to see it.

Io. Could I choose ?
I who endure such pangs now, by that god !

Prometheus. Learn from me, therefore, that the
event shall be.

Io. By whom shall his imperial sceptred hand
Be emptied so ?

Prometheus. Himself shall spoil himself,
Through his idiotic counsels.

Io. How ? declare :
Unless the word bring evil.

Prometheus. He shall wed ;
And in the marriage-bond be joined to grief. 890

Io. A heavenly bride — or human ? Speak it out
If it be utterable.

Prometheus. Why should I say which ?
It ought not to be uttered, verily.

Io. Then
It is his wife shall tear him from his throne ?

Prometheus. It is his wife shall bear a son to him,
More mighty than the father.

Io. From this doom
Hath he no refuge ?

Prometheus. None : or ere that I,
Loosed from these fetters —

Io. Yea — but who shall loose
While Zeus is adverse ?

Prometheus. One who is born of thee :
It is ordained so.

Io. What is this thou sayest ? 900

A son of mine shall liberate thee from woe ?

Prometheus. After ten generations, count three
more,

And find him in the third.

Io. The oracle
Remains obscure.

Prometheus. And search it not, to learn
Thine own griefs from it.

Io. Point me not to a good,
To leave me straight bereaved.

Prometheus. I am prepared
To grant thee one of two things.

Io. But which two ?
Set them before me ; grant me power to choose.

Prometheus. I grant it ; choose now : shall I name
aloud

What griefs remain to wound thee, or what hand
Shall save me out of mine !

Chorus. Vouchsafe, O god,
The one grace of the twain to her who prays ;
The next to me ; and turn back neither prayer
Dishonour'd by denial. To herself
Recount the future wandering of her feet ;
Then point me to the looser of thy chain,
Because I yearn to know him.

Prometheus. Since ye will,
Of absolute will, this knowledge, I will set
No contrary against it, nor keep back
A word of all ye ask for. *Io,* first 920
To thee I must relate thy wandering course
Far winding. As I tell it, write it down
In thy soul's book of memories. When thou hast past
The reflux bound that parts two continents,
Track on the footsteps of the orient sun

In his own fire, across the roar of seas, —
 Fly till thou hast reached the Gorgonæan flats
 Beside Cisthené. There, the Phorcides,
 Three ancient maidens, live, with shape of swan,
 One tooth between them, and one common eye : 930
 On whom the sun doth never look at all
 With all his rays, nor evermore the moon
 When she looks through the night. Anear to whom
 Are the Gorgon sisters three, en clothed with wings,
 With twisted snakes for ringlets, man-abhorred :
 There is no mortal gazes in their face
 And gazing can breathe on. I speak of such
 To guard thee from their horror. Ay, and list
 Another tale of a dreadful sight ; beware
 The Griffins, those unbarking dogs of Zeus, 940
 Those sharp-mouthed dogs ! — and the Arimas pian
 host

Of one-eyed horsemen, habiting beside
 The river of Pluto that runs bright with gold :
 Approach them not, beseech thee ! Presently
 Thou'lt come to a distant land, a dusky tribe
 Of dwellers at the fountain of the Sun,
 Whence flows the river Æthiops ; wind along
 Its banks and turn off at the cataracts,
 Just as the Nile pours from the Byblin hills
 His holy and sweet wave ; his course shall guide 950
 Thine own to that triangular Nile-ground
 Where, Io, is ordained for thee and thine
 A lengthened exile. Have I said in this
 Aught darkly or incompletely ? — now repeat
 The question, make the knowledge fuller ! Lo,
 I have more leisure than I covet, here.

Chorus. If thou canst tell us aught that's left un-
 told,

Or loosely told, of her most dreary flight,
Declare it straight : but if thou hast uttered all,
Grant us that latter grace for which we prayed, 960
Remembering how we prayed it.

Prometheus. She has heard
The uttermost of her wandering. There it ends.
But that she may be certain not to have heard
All vainly, I will speak what she endured
Ere coming hither, and invoke the past
To prove my prescience true. And so — to leave
A multitude of words and pass at once
To the subject of thy course — when thou hadst gone
To those Molossian plains which sweep around
Dodona shouldering Heaven, whereby the fane 970
Of Zeus Thesprotian keepeth oracle,
And, wonder past belief, where oaks do wave
Articulate adjurations — (ay, the same
Saluted thee in no perplexèd phrase
But clear with glory, noble wife of Zeus
That shouldst be, — there some sweetness took thy
sense !)

Thou didst rush further onward, stung along
The ocean-shore, toward Rhea's mighty bay
And, tost back from it, wast tost to it again
In stormy evolution : — and, know well, 980
In coming time that hollow of the sea
Shall bear the name Ionian and present
A monument of Io's passage through
Unto all mortals. Be these words the signs
Of my soul's power to look beyond the veil
Of visible things. The rest, to you and her
I will declare in common audience, nymphs,
Returning thither where my speech brake off.
There is a town Canobus, built upon

The earth's fair margin at the mouth of Nile 990
 And on the mound washed up by it ; Io, there
 Shall Zeus give back to thee thy perfect mind,
 And only by the pressure and the touch
 Of a hand not terrible ; and thou to Zeus
 Shalt bear a dusky son who shall be called
 Thence, Epaphus, *Touched*. That son shall pluck
 the fruit
 Of all that land wide-watered by the flow
 Of Nile ; but after him, when counting out
 As far as the fifth full generation, then
 Full fifty maidens, a fair woman-race, 1000
 Shall back to Argos turn reluctantly,
 To fly the proffered nuptials of their kin,
 Their father's brothers. These being passion-struck,
 Like falcons bearing hard on flying doves,
 Shall follow, hunting at a quarry of love
 They should not hunt ; till envious Heaven maintain
 A curse betwixt that beauty and their desire,
 And Greece received them, to be overcome
 In murderous woman-war, by fierce red hands
 Kept savage by the night. For every wife 1010
 Shall slay a husband, dyeing deep in blood
 The sword of a double edge — (I wish indeed
 As fair a marriage-joy to all my foes !)
 One bride alone shall fail to smite to death
 The head upon her pillow, touched with love,
 Made impotent of purpose and impelled
 To choose the lesser evil, — shame on her cheeks,
 Than blood-guilt on her hands : which bride shall bear
 A royal race in Argos. Tedious speech
 Were needed to relate particulars 1020
 Of these things ; 'tis enough that from her seed
 Shall spring the strong He, famous with the bow,

Whose arm shall break my fetters off. Behold,
My mother Themis, that old Titaness,
Delivered to me such an oracle, —
But how and when, I should be long to speak,
And thou, in hearing, wouldst not gain at all.

Io. Eleleu, eleleu !

How the spasm and the pain
And the fire on the brain

1030

Strike, burning me through !

How the sting of the curse, all aflame as it flew,
Pricks me onward again !

How my heart in its terror is spurning my breast,
And my eyes, like the wheels of a chariot, roll round !
I am whirled from my course, to the east, to the west,
In the whirlwind of phrensy all madly inwound —
And my mouth is unbridled for anguish and hate,
And my words beat in vain, in wild storms of unrest,
On the sea of my desolate fate.

1040

[*Io rushes out.*]

Chorus. — Strophe.

Oh, wise was he, oh, wise was he
Who first within his spirit knew
And with his tongue declared it true
That love comes best that comes unto
The equal of degree !

And that the poor and that the low
Should seek no love from those above,
Whose souls are fluttered with the flow
Of airs about their golden height,
Or proud because they see arow
Ancestral crowns of light.

1050

Antistrophe.

Oh, never, never may ye, Fates,
 Behold me with your awful eyes
 Lift mine too fondly up the skies
 Where Zeus upon the purple waits !
 Nor let me step too near — too near
 To any suitor, bright from heaven :
 Because I see, because I fear
 This loveless maiden vexed and lad
 By this fell curse of Heré, driven 1060
 On wanderings dread and drear.

Epode.

Nay, grant an equal troth instead
 Of nuptial love, to bind me by !
 It will not hurt, I shall not dread
 To meet it in reply.
 But let not love from those above
 Revert and fix me, as I said,
 With that inevitable Eye !
 I have no sword to fight that fight,
 I have no strength to tread that path, 1070
 I know not if my nature hath
 The power to bear, I cannot see
 Whither from Zeus's infinite
 I have the power to flee.

Prometheus. Yet Zeus, albeit most absolute of
 will,
 Shall turn to meekness, — such a marriage-rite
 He holds in preparation, which anon
 Shall thrust him headlong from his gerent seat
 Adown the abysmal void, and so the curse

His father Chronos muttered in his fall, 1080
 As he fell from his ancient throne and cursed,
 Shall be accomplished wholly. No escape
 From all that ruin shall the filial Zeus
 Find granted to him from any of his gods,
 Unless I teach him. I the refuge know,
 And I, the means. Now, therefore, let him sit
 And brave the imminent doom, and fix his faith
 On his supernal noises, hurtling on
 With restless hand the bolt that breathes out fire ;
 For these things shall not help him, none of them,
 Nor hinder his perdition when he falls 1091
 To shame, and lower than patience : such a foe
 He doth himself prepare against himself,
 A wonder of unconquerable hate,
 An organiser of sublimer fire
 Than glares in lightnings, and of grander sound
 Than aught the thunder rolls, out-thundering it,
 With power to shatter in Poseidon's fist
 The trident-spear which, while it plagues the sea,
 Doth shake the shores around it. Ay, and Zeus,
 Precipitated thus, shall learn at length 1101
 The difference betwixt rule and servitude.

Chorus. Thou makest threats for Zeus of thy desires.

Prometheus. I tell you, all these things shall be fulfilled.

Even so as I desire them.

Chorus. Must we then

Look out for one shall come to master Zeus ?

Prometheus. These chains weigh lighter than his sorrows shall.

Chorus. How art thou not afraid to utter such words ?

Prometheus. What should *I* fear who cannot die?

Chorus. But *be*

Can visit thee with dreder woe than death's. 1110

Prometheus. Why, let him do it! I am here,
prepared

For all things and their pangs.

Chorus. The wise are they

Who reverence *Adrasteia*.

Prometheus. Reverence thou,

Adore thou, flatter thou, whomever reigns,

Whenever reigning! but for me, your *Zeus*

Is less than nothing. Let him act and reign

His brief hour out according to his will —

He will not, therefore, rule the gods too long.

But lo! I see that courier-god of *Zeus*, 1119

That new-made menial of the new-crowned king:

He doubtless comes to announce to us something new.

HERMES enters.

Hermes. I speak to thee, the sophist, the talker-
down

Of scorn by scorn, the sinner against gods,

The reverencer of men, the thief of fire, —

I speak to thee and adjure thee! *Zeus* requires

Thy declaration of what marriage-rite

Thus moves thy vaunt and shall hereafter cause

His fall from empire. Do not wrap thy speech

In riddles, but speak clearly! Never cast

Ambiguous paths, *Prometheus*, for my feet, 1130

Since *Zeus*, thou mayst perceive, is scarcely won

To mercy by such means.

Prometheus. A speech well-mouthed

In the utterance, and full-minded in the sense,

As doth befit a servant of the gods!

New gods, ye newly reign, and think forsooth
 Ye dwell in towers too high for any dart
 To carry a wound there ! — have I not stood by
 While two kings fell from thence ? and shall I not
 Behold the third, the same who rules you now,
 Fall, shamed to sudden ruin ? — Do I seem 1140
 To tremble and quail before your modern gods ?
 Far be it from me ! — For thyself, depart,
 Re-tread thy steps in haste. 'To all thou hast asked
 I answer nothing.

Hermes. Such a wind of pride
 Impelled thee of yore full-sail upon these rocks.

Prometheus. I would not barter — learn thou
 soothly that ! —

My suffering for thy service. I maintain
 It is a nobler thing to serve these rocks
 Than live a faithful slave to father Zeus.
 Thus upon scorners I retort their scorn. 1150

Hermes. It seems that thou dost glory in thy
 despair.

Prometheus. I glory ? would my foes did glory so,
 And I stood by to see them ! — naming whom,
 Thou art not unremembered.

Hermes. Dost thou charge
 Me also with the blame of thy mischance ?

Prometheus. I tell thee I loathe the universal gods,
 Who for the good I gave them rendered back
 The ill of their injustice.

Hermes. Thou art mad —
 Thou art raving, Titan, at the fever-height. 1159

Prometheus. If it be madness to abhor my foes,
 May I be mad !

Hermes. If thou wert prosperous
 Thou wouldst be unendurable.

Prometheus. Alas !

Hermes. Zeus knows not that word.

Prometheus. But maturing Time
Teaches all things.

Hermes. Howbeit, thou hast not learnt
The wisdom yet, thou needest.

Prometheus. If I had,
I should not talk thus with a slave like thee.

Hermes. No answer thou vouchsafest, I believe,
To the great Sire's requirement.

Prometheus. Verily
I owe him grateful service, — and should pay it.

Hermes. Why, thou dost mock me, Titan, as I
stood 1170

A child before thy face.

Prometheus. No child, forsooth,
But yet more foolish than a foolish child,
If thou expect that I should answer aught
Thy Zeus can ask. No torture from his hand
Nor any machination in the world
Shall force mine utterance ere he loose, himself,
These cankerous fetters from me. For the rest,
Let him now hurl his blanching lightnings down,
And with his white-winged snows and mutterings
deep

Of subterranean thunders mix all things, 1180
Confound them in disorder. None of this
Shall bend my sturdy will and make me speak
The name of his dethroner who shall come.

Hermes. Can this avail thee ? Look to it !

Prometheus. Long ago
It was looked forward to, precounselled of.

Hermes. Vain god, take righteous courage ! dare
for once

To apprehend and front thine agonies
With a just prudence.

Prometheus. Vainly dost thou chafe
My soul with exhortation, as yonder sea
Goes beating on the rock. Oh, think no more 1190
That I, fear-struck by Zeus to a woman's mind,
Will supplicate him, loathed as he is,
With feminine upliftings of my hands,
To break these chains. Far from me be the thought !

Hermes. I have indeed, methinks, said much in
vain,

For still thy heart beneath my showers of prayers
Lies dry and hard — nay, leaps like a young horse
Who bites against the new bit in his teeth,
And tugs and struggles against the new-tried rein, —
Still fiercest in the feeblest thing of all, 1200
Which sophism is ; since absolute will disjoined
From perfect mind is worse than weak. Behold,
Unless my words persuade thee, what a blast
And whirlwind of inevitable woe
Must sweep persuasion through thee ! For at first
The Father will split up this jut of rock
With the great thunder and the bolted flame
And hide thy body where a hinge of stone
Shall catch it like an arm ; and when thou hast passed
A long black time within, thou shalt come out 1210
To front the sun while Zeus's winged hound,
The strong carnivorous eagle, shall wheel down
To meet thee, self-called to a daily feast,
And set his fierce beak in thee and tear off
The long rags of thy flesh and batten deep
Upon thy dusky liver. Do not look
For any end moreover to this curse
Or ere some god appear, to accept thy pangs

On his own head vicarious, and descend
 With unreluctant step the darks of hell 1220
 And gloomy abysses around Tartarus.
 Then ponder this — this threat is not a growth
 Of vain invention ; it is spoken and meant ;
 King Zeus's mouth is impotent to lie,
 Consummating the utterance by the act ;
 So, look to it, thou ! take heed, and nevermore
 Forget good counsel, to indulge self-will.

Chorus. Our Hermes suits his reasons to the
 times ;

At least I think so, since he bids thee drop
 Self-will for prudent counsel. Yield to him ! 1230
 When the wise err, their wisdom makes their shame.

Prometheus. Unto me the foreknower, this man-
 date of power

He cries, to reveal it.

What's strange in my fate, if I suffer from hate

At the hour that I feel it ?

Let the locks of the lightning, all bristling and whiten-
 ing,

Flash, coiling me round,

While the æther goes surging 'neath thunder and
 scourging

Of wild winds unbound !

1239

Let the blast of the firmament whirl from its place

The earth rooted below,

And the brine of the ocean, in rapid emotion,

Be driven in the face

Of the stars up in heaven, as they walk to and fro !

Let him hurl me anon into Tartarus — on —

To the blackest degree,

With Necessity's vortices strangling me down ;

But he cannot join death to a fate meant for *me* !

Hermes. Why, the words that he speaks and the thoughts that he thinks

Are maniacal ! — add, 1250

If the Fate who hath bound him should loose not the links,

He were utterly mad.

Then depart ye who groan with him,

Leaving to moan with him, —

Go in haste ! lest the roar of the thunder anearning

Should blast you to idiocy, living and hearing.

Chorus. Change thy speech for another, thy thought for a new,

If to move me and teach me indeed be thy care !

For thy words swerve so far from the loyal and true

That the thunder of Zeus seems more easy to bear.

How ! couldst teach me to venture such vileness ?

behold ! 1261

I choose, with this victim, this anguish foretold !

I recoil from the traitor in hate and disdain,

And I know that the curse of the treason is worse

Than the pang of the chain.

Hermes. Then remember, O nymphs, what I tell you before,

Nor, when pierced by the arrows that Até will throw you,

Cast blame on your fate and declare evermore

That Zeus thrust you on anguish he did not fore-show you.

Nay, verily, nay ! for ye perish anon 1270

For your deed — by your choice. By no blindness of doubt,

No abruptness of doom, but by madness alone,

In the great net of Até, whence none cometh out,

Ye are wound and undone.

Prometheus. Ay! in act now, in word now no more,

Earth is rocking in space.

And the thunders crash up with a roar upon roar,
And the eddying lightnings flash fire in my face,
And the whirlwinds are whirling the dust round and round,

And the blasts of the winds universal leap free 1280
And blow each upon each with a passion of sound,
And æther goes mingling in storm with the sea.
Such a curse on my head, in a manifest dread,

From the hand of your Zeus has been hurtled along.
O my mother's fair glory! O Æther, enringing
All eyes with the sweet common light of thy bringing!
Dost see how I suffer this wrong?

A LAMENT FOR ADONIS.

FROM THE GREEK OF BION.

I.

I MOURN for Adonis — Adonis is dead,

Fair Adonis is dead and the loves are lamenting.
Sleep, Cypris, no more on thy purple-strewed bed:
Arise, wretch stoled in black; beat thy breast unrelenting,
And shriek to the worlds, "Fair Adonis is dead!"

II.

I mourn for Adonis — the Loves are lamenting.

He lies on the hills in his beauty and death;
The white tusk of a boar has transpierced his white thigh.

Cytherea grows mad at his thin gasping breath, 9
 While the black blood drips down on the pale ivory,
 And his eyeballs lie quenched with the weight of
 his brows,
 The rose fades from his lips, and upon them just parted
 The kiss dies the goddess consents not to lose,
 Though the kiss of the Dead cannot make her glad-
 hearted :
 He knows not who kisses him dead in the dew.

III.

I mourn for Adonis — the Loves are lamenting.
 Deep, deep in the thigh is Adonis's wound,
 But a deeper, is Cypris's bosom presenting.
 The youth lieth dead while his dogs howl around,
 And the nymphs weep aloud from the mists of the hill,
 And the poor Aphrodité, with tresses unbound, 21
 All dishevelled, unsandaled, shrieks mournful and shrill
 Through the dusk of the groves. The thorns, tear-
 ing her feet,
 Gather up the red flower of her blood which is holy,
 Each footstep she takes ; and the valleys repeat
 The sharp cry she utters and draw it out slowly.
 She calls on her spouse, her Assyrian, on him
 Her own youth, while the dark blood spreads over
 his body,
 The chest taking hue from the gash in the limb,
 And the bosom, once ivory, turning to ruddy. 30

IV.

Ah, ah, Cytherea ! the Loves are lamenting.
 She lost her fair spouse and so lost her fair smile :
 When he lived she was fair, by the whole world's
 consenting,

Whose fairness is dead with him : woe worth the while !

All the mountains above and the oaklands below

Murmur, ah, ah, Adonis ! the streams overflow

Aphrodité's deep wail ; river-fountains in pity

When soft in the hills, and the flowers as they blow

Redden outward with sorrow, while all hear her go

With the song of her sadness through mountain and city. 40

v.

Ah, ah, Cytherea ! Adonis is dead,

Fair Adonis is dead — Echo answers, Adonis !

Who weeps not for Cypris, when bowing her head

She stares at the wound where it gapes and astonies ?

— When, ah, ah ! — she saw how the blood ran away

And empurpled the thigh, and, with wild hands flung out,

Said with sobs : “ Stay, Adonis ! unhappy one, stay,

Let me feel thee once more, let me ring thee about

With the clasp of my arms, and press kiss into kiss !

Wait a little, Adonis, and kiss me again, 50

For the last time, beloved, — and but so much of this

That the kiss may learn life from the warmth of the strain !

— Till thy breath shall exude from thy soul to my mouth,

To my heart, and, the love-charm I once more receiving

May drink thy love in and keep of a truth

That one kiss in the place of Adonis the living.

Thou fliest me, mournful one, fliest me far,

My Adonis, and seekest the Acheron portal, —
To Hell's cruel King goest down with a scar, 59

While I weep and live on like a wretched immortal,
And follow no step ! O Persephoné, take him,

My husband ! — thou'rt better and brighter than I,
So all beauty flows down to thee : I cannot make him

Look up at my grief ; there's despair in my cry,
Since I wail for Adonis who died to me — died to
me —

Then, I fear *thee* ! — Art thou dead, my Adored ?
Passion ends like a dream in the sleep that's denied to
me,

Cypris is widowed, the Loves seek their lord
All the house through in vain. Charm of cestus has
ceased

With thy clasp ! O too bold in the hunt past pre-
venting, 70

Ay, mad, thou so fair, to have strife with a beast ! ”

Thus the goddess wailed on — and the Loves are
lamenting.

VI.

Ah, ah, Cytherea ! Adonis is dead.

She wept tear after tear with the blood which was
shed,

And both turned into flowers for the earth's garden-
close,

Her tears to the windflower ; his blood, to the rose.

VII.

I mourn for Adonis — Adonis is dead.

Weep no more in the woods, Cytherea, thy lover !
So, well : make a place for his corse in thy bed, 79

With the purples thou sleepest in, under and over.

He's fair though a corse — a fair corse, like a sleeper.

Lay him soft in the silks he had pleasure to fold
When, beside thee at night, holy dreams deep and
deeper

Enclosed his young life on the couch made of gold.
Love him still, poor Adonis ; cast on him together

The crowns and the flowers : since he died from
the place,

Why, let all die with him ; let the blossoms go wither,
Rain myrtles and olive-buds down on his face.

Rain the myrrh down, let all that is best fall a-pining,
Since the myrrh of his life from thy keeping is swept.

Pale he lay, thine Adonis, in purples reclining ; 91

The Loves raised their voices around him and wept.

They have shorn their bright curls off to cast on Adonis ;
One treads on his bow, — on his arrows, another, —
One breaks up a well-feathered quiver, and one is

Bent low at a sandal, untying the strings,

And one carries the vases of gold from the springs,
While one washes the wound, — and behind them a
brother

Fans down on the body sweet air with his wings.

VIII.

Cytherea herself now the Loves are lamenting. 100

Each torch at the door Hymenæus blew out ;
And, the marriage-wreath dropping its leaves as re-
penting,

No more “ Hymen, Hymen,” is chanted about,
But the *ai ai* instead — “ Ai alas ! ” is begun

For Adonis, and then follows “ Ai Hymenæus ! ”

The Graces are weeping for Cinyris' son,

Sobbing low each to each, “ His fair eyes cannot
see us ! ”

SONG OF THE ROSE.

139

Their wail strikes more shrill than the sadder Dioné's.
 The Fates mourn aloud for Adonis, Adonis, 109
 Deep chanting; he hears not a word that they say :
 He *would* hear, but Persephoné has him in keeping.
 — Cease moan, Cytherea ! leave pomps for to-day,
 And weep new when a new year refits thee for
 weeping.

SONG OF THE ROSE.

ATTRIBUTED TO SAPPHO.

(From *Achilles Tatius*.)

If Zeus chose us a King of the flowers in his mirth,
 He would call to the Rose and would royally crown
 it ;
 For the Rose, ho, the Rose ! is the grace of the earth,
 Is the light of the plants that are growing upon it :
 For the Rose, ho, the Rose ! is the eye of the flowers,
 Is the blush of the meadows that feel themselves
 fair,
 Is the lightning of beauty that strikes through the bow-
 ers
 On pale lovers who sit in the glow unaware.
 Ho, the Rose breathes of love ! ho, the Rose lifts the
 cup
 To the red lips of Cypris invoked for a guest ! 10
 Ho, the Rose, having curled its sweet leaves for the
 world,
 Takes delight in the motion its petals keep up,
 As they laugh to the wind as it laughs from the west !

FROM THEOCRITUS.

THE CYCLOPS.

(IDYL XI.)

AND so an easier life our Cyclops drew,
 The ancient Polyphemus, who in youth
 Loved Galatea while the manhood grew
 Adown his cheeks and darkened round his mouth.
 Not yet he cared for apples, olives, roses ;
 Love made him mad : the whole world was neglected,
 The very sheep went backward to their closes
 From out the fair green pastures, self-directed.
 And singing Galatea, thus, he wore
 The sunrise down along the weedy shore, 10
 And pined alone, and felt the cruel wound
 Beneath his heart, which Cypris' arrow bore,
 With a deep pang ; but, so, the cure was found ;
 And sitting on a lofty rock he cast
 His eyes upon the sea, and sang at last : —
 " O whitest Galatea, can it be
 That thou shouldst spurn me off who love thee so ?
 More white than curds, my girl, thou art to see,
 More meek than lambs, more full of leaping glee
 Than kids, and brighter than the early glow 20
 On grapes that swell to ripen, — sour like thee !
 Thou comest to me with the fragrant sleep,
 And with the fragrant sleep thou goest from me ;
 Thou fliest . . . fliest, as a frightened sheep
 Flies the grey wolf ! — yet Love did overcome me,
 So long ; — I loved thee, maiden, first of all
 When down the hills (my mother fast beside thee)
 I saw thee stray to pluck the summer-fall

Of hyacinth bells, and went myself to guide thee :
 And since my eyes have seen thee, they can leave
 thee

No more, from that day's light ! But thou . . .
 by Zeus,

Thou wilt not care for *that*, to let it grieve thee !

I know thee, fair one, why thou springest loose
 From my arm round thee. Why ? I tell thee,
 Dear !

One shaggy eyebrow draws its smudging road
 Straight through my ample front, from ear to ear, —

One eye rolls underneath ; and yawning, broad
 Flat nostrils feel the bulging lips too near.

Yet . . . ho, ho ! — *I*, — whatever I appear, —

Do feed a thousand oxen ! When I have done, 40
 I milk the cows, and drink the milk that's best !

I lack no cheese, while summer keeps the sun ;
 And after, in the cold, it's ready prest !

And then, I know to sing, as there is none
 Of all the Cyclops can, . . . a song of thee,
 Sweet apple of my soul, on love's fair tree,
 And of myself who love thee . . . till the West
 Forgets the light, and all but I have rest.

I feed for thee, besides, eleven fair does,

And all in fawn ; and four tame whelps of bears. 50
 Come to me, Sweet ! thou shalt have all of those

In change for love ! I will not halve the shares.
 Leave the blue sea, with pure white arms extended

To the dry shore ; and, in my cave's recess,
 Thou shalt be gladder for the moonlight ended, —

For here be laurels, spiral cypresses,
 Dark ivy, and a vine whose leaves enfold

Most luscious grapes ; and here is water cold,

The wooded Ætna pours down through the trees

From the white snows, — which gods were scarce too
bold, 60

To drink in turn with nectar. Who with these
Would choose the salt wave of the lukewarm seas ?
Nay, look on me ! If I am hairy and rough,

I have an oak's heart in me ; there's a fire
In these grey ashes which burns hot enough ;
And when I burn for *thee*, I grudge the pyre

No fuel . . . not my soul, nor this one eye, —
Most precious thing I have, because thereby
I see thee, Fairest ! Out, alas ! I wish

My mother had borne me finned like a fish, 70
That I might plunge down in the ocean near thee,

And kiss thy glittering hand between the weeds,
If still thy face were turned ; and I would bear thee
Each lily white, and poppy fair that bleeds

Its red heart down its leaves ! — one gift, for hours
Of summer, — one, for winter ; since, to cheer
thee,

I could not bring at once all kinds of flowers.

Even now, girl, now, I fain would learn to swim,
If stranger in a ship sailed nigh, I wis, —

That I may know how sweet a thing it is 80
To live down with you in the Deep and Dim !

Come up, O Galatea, from the ocean,

And, having come, forget again to go !

As I, who sing out here my heart's emotion,

Could sit for ever. Come up from below !

Come, keep my flocks beside me, milk my kine, —

Come, press my cheese, distrain my whey and
curd !

Ah, mother ! she alone . . . that mother of mine . . .

Did wrong me sore ! I blame her ! — Not a
word

FROM APULEIUS.

143

Of kindly intercession did she address 90
 Thine ear with for my sake ; and ne'ertheless
 She saw me wasting, wasting, day by day :
 Both head and feet were aching, I will say,
 All sick for grief, as I myself was sick.
 O Cyclops, Cyclops, whither hast thou sent
 Thy soul on fluttering wings? If thou wert bent
 On turning bowls, or pulling green and thick
 The sprouts to give thy lambkins, — thou wouldst
 make thee
 A wiser Cyclops than for what we take thee.
 Milk dry the present ! Why pursue too quick 100
 That future which is fugitive aright ?
 Thy Galatea thou shalt haply find, —
 Or else a maiden fairer and more kind ;
 For many girls do call me through the night,
 And, as they call, do laugh out silverly.
 I, too, am something in the world, I see ! ”

While thus the Cyclops love and lambs did fold,
 Ease came with song he could not buy with gold.

FROM APULEIUS.

PSYCHE GAZING ON CUPID.

(METAMORPH., LIB. IV.)

THEN Psyche, weak in body and soul, put on
 The cruelty of Fate, in place of strength :
 She raised the lamp to see what should be done,
 And seized the steel, and was a man at length
 In courage, though a woman ! Yes, but when
 The light fell on the bed whereby she stood

To view the "*beast*" that lay there, — certes, then,
 She saw the gentlest, sweetest beast in wood —
 Even Cupid's self, the *beauteous* god ! more beau-
 teous

For that sweet sleep across his eyelids dim. 10
 The light, the lady carried as she viewed,
 Did blush for pleasure as it lighted him,
 The dagger trembled from its aim unduteous ;
 And *she* . . . oh, *she* — amazed and soul-dis-
 traught,

And fainting in her whiteness like a veil,
 Slid down upon her knees, and, shuddering, thought
 To hide — though in her heart — the dagger pale !
 She would have done it, but her hands did fail

To hold the guilty steel, they shivered so, —
 And feeble, exhausted, unawares she took 20
 To gazing on the god, — till, look by look,

Her eyes with larger life did fill and glow.
 She saw his golden head alight with curls, —
 She might have guessed their brightness in the dark
 By that ambrosial smell of heavenly mark !

She saw the milky brow, more pure than pearls,
 The purple of the cheeks, divinely sundered
 By the globed ringlets, as they glided free,
 Some back, some forwards, — all so radiantly,

That, as she watched them there, she never won-
 dered 30

To see the lamplight, where it touched them,
 tremble :

On the god's shoulders, too, she marked his wings

Shine faintly at the edges and resemble
 A flower that's near to blow. The poet sings
 And lover sighs, that Love is fugitive ;
 And certes, though these pinions lay reposing,

The feathers on them seemed to stir and live
 As if by instinct, closing and unclosing.
 Meantime the god's fair body slumbered deep,
 All worthy of Venus, in his shining sleep ; 40
 While at the bed's foot lay the quiver, bow,
 And darts, — his arms of godhead. Psyche gazed
 With eyes that drank the wonders in, — said, —
 “ Lo,
 Be these my husband's arms ? ” — and straightway
 raised
 An arrow from the quiver-case, and tried
 Its point against her finger, — trembling till
 She pushed it in too deeply (foolish bride !)
 And made her blood some dewdrops small distil,
 And learnt to love Love, of her own good-will.

PSYCHE WAFTEO BY ZEPHYRUS.

(METAMORPH., LIB. IV.)

WHILE Psyche wept upon the rock forsaken,
 Alone, despairing, dreading, — gradually
 By Zephyrus she was enwrapt and taken
 Still trembling, — like the lilies planted high, —
 Through all her fair white limbs. Her vesture spread,
 Her very bosom eddying with surprise, —
 He drew her slowly from the mountain-head,
 And bore her down the valleys with wet eyes,
 And laid her in the lap of a green dell
 As soft with grass and flowers as any nest, 10
 With trees beside her, and a limpid well :
 Yet Love was not far off from all that Rest.

PSYCHE AND PAN.

(METAMORPH., LIB. V.)

THE gentle River, in her Cupid's honour,
 Because he used to warm the very wave,
 Did ripple aside, instead of closing on her,
 And cast up Psyche, with a reflux brave,
 Upon the flowery bank, — all sad and sinning.
 Then Pan, the rural god, by chance was leaning
 Along the brow of waters as they wound,
 Kissing the reed-nymph till she sank to ground,
 And teaching, without knowledge of the meaning,
 To run her voice in music after his 10
 Down many a shifting note ; (the goats around,
 In wandering pasture and most leaping bliss,
 Drawn on to crop the river's flowery hair).
 And as the hoary god beheld her there,
 The poor, worn, fainting Psyche ! — knowing all
 The grief she suffered, he did gently call
 Her name, and softly comfort her despair : —

“ O wise, fair lady, I am rough and rude,
 And yet experienced through my weary age !
 And if I read aright, as soothsayer should, 20
 Thy faltering steps of heavy pilgrimage,
 Thy paleness, deep as snow we cannot see
 The roses through, — thy sighs of quick returning,
 Thine eyes that seem, themselves, two souls in mourn-
 ing, —
 Thou lovest, girl, too well, and bitterly !
 But hear me : rush no more to a headlong fall :
 Seek no more deaths ! leave wail, lay sorrow down,
 And pray the sovran god ; and use withal
 Such prayer as best may suit a tender youth,

Well-pleased to bend to flatteries from thy mouth, 30
And feel them stir the myrtle of his crown."

— So spake the shepherd-god ; and answer none
Gave Psyche in return : but silently
She did him homage with a bended knee,
And took the onward path. —

PSYCHE PROPITIATING CERES.

(METAMORPH., LIB. VI.)

THEN mother Ceres from afar beheld her,
While Psyche touched, with reverent fingers meek,
The temple's scythes ; and with a cry compelled
her : —

' O wretched Psyche, Venus roams to seek
Thy wandering footsteps round the weary earth,
Anxious and maddened, and adjures thee forth
To accept the imputed pang, and let her wreak
Full vengeance with full force of deity !

Yet *thou*, forsooth, art in my temple here,
Touching my scythes, assuming my degree, 10
And daring to have thoughts that are not fear !"

— But Psyche clung to her feet, and as they moved
Rained tears along their track, tear dropped on tear,
And drew the dust on in her trailing locks,
And still, with passionate prayer, the charge dis-
proved : —

" Now, by thy right hand's gathering from the shocks
Of golden corn, — and by thy gladsome rites
Of harvest, — and thy consecrated sights
Shut safe and mute in chests, — and by the course
Of thy slave-dragons, — and the driving force 20
Of ploughs along Sicilian glebes profound, —

By thy swift chariot, — by thy steadfast ground, —
 By all those nuptial torches that departed
 With thy lost daughter, — and by those that shone
 Back with her, when she came again glad-hearted, —
 And by all other mysteries which are done
 In silence at Eleusis, — I beseech thee,
 O Ceres, take some pity, and abstain
 From giving to my soul extremest pain
 Who am the wretched Psyche ! Let me teach thee 30
 A little mercy, and have thy leave to spend
 A few days only in thy garnered corn,
 Until that wrathful goddess, at the end,
 Shall feel her hate grow mild the longer borne, —
 Or till, alas ! — this faintness at my breast
 Pass from me, and my spirit apprehend
 From life-long woe a breath-time hour of rest ! ”
 — But Ceres answered “ I am moved indeed
 By prayers so moist with tears, and would defend
 The poor beseecher from more utter need : 40
 But where old oaths, anterior ties, commend,
 I cannot fail to a sister, lie to a friend,
 As Venus is to *me*. Depart with speed ! ”

PSYCHE AND THE EAGLE.

(METAMORPH., LIB. VI.)

But sovran Jove's rapacious Bird, the regal
 High percher on the lightning, the great eagle,
 Drove down with rushing wings ; and, — thinking how,
 By Cupid's help, he bore from Ida's brow
 A cup-boy for his master, — he inclined
 To yield, in just return, an influence kind ;
 The god being honoured in his lady's woe.
 And thus the Bird wheeled downward from the track,

Gods follow gods in, to the level low
 Of that poor face of Psyche left in wrack. 10
 — “Now fie, thou simple girl!” the Bird began;
 “For if thou think to steal and carry back
 A drop of holiest stream that ever ran,
 No simpler thought, methinks, were found in man.
 What! know’st thou not these Stygian waters be
 Most holy, even to Jove? that as, on earth,
 Men swear by gods, and by the thunder’s worth,
 Even so the heavenly gods do utter forth
 Their oaths by Styx’s flowing majesty?
 And yet, one little urnful, I agree 20
 To grant thy need!” Whereat, all hastily,
 He takes it, fills it from the willing wave,
 And bears it in his beak, incarnadined
 By the last Titan-prey he screamed to have;
 And, striking calmly out, against the wind,
 Vast wings on each side, — there, where Psyche stands,
 He drops the urn down in her lifted hands.

PSYCHE AND CERBERUS.

(METAMORPH., LIB. VI.)

A MIGHTY dog with three colossal necks,
 And heads in grand proportion; vast as fear,
 With jaws that bark the thunder out that breaks
 In most innocuous dread for ghosts anear,
 Who are safe in death from sorrow: he reclines
 Across the threshold of queen Proserpine’s
 Dark-sweeping halls, and, there, for Pluto’s spouse,
 Doth guard the entrance of the empty house.
 When Psyche threw the cake to him, once amain
 He howled up wildly from his hunger-pain, 10
 And was still, after. —

PSYCHE AND PROSERPINE.

(METAMORPH., LIB. VI.)

THEN Psyche entered in to Proserpine
 In the dark house, and straightway did decline
 With meek denial the luxurious seat,
 The liberal board for welcome strangers spread,
 But sat down lowly at the dark queen's feet,
 And told her tale, and brake her oaten bread.
 And when she had given the pyx in humble duty,
 And told how Venus did entreat the queen
 To fill it up with only one day's beauty
 She used in Hades, star-bright and serene, 10
 To beautify the Cyprian, who had been
 All spoilt with grief in nursing her sick boy, —
 Then Proserpine, in malice and in joy,
 Smiled in the shade, and took the pyx, and put
 A secret in it ; and so, filled and shut,
 Gave it again to Psyche. Could she tell
 It held no beauty, but a dream of hell ?

PSYCHE AND VENUS.

(METAMORPH., LIB. VI.)

AND Psyche brought to Venus what was sent
 By Pluto's spouse ; the paler, that she went
 So low to seek it, down the dark descent.

MERCURY CARRIES PSYCHE TO OLYMPUS.

(METAMORPH., LIB. VI.)

THEN Jove commanded the god Mercury
 To float up Psyche from the earth. And she
 Sprang at the first word, as the fountain springs,
 And shot up bright and rustling through his wings.

MARRIAGE OF PSYCHE AND CUPID.

(METAMORPH., LIB. VI.)

And Jove's right hand approached the ambrosial bowl
To Psyche's lips, that scarce dared yet to smile, —
“Drink, O my daughter, and acquaint thy soul
With deathless uses, and be glad the while !
No more shall Cupid leave thy lovely side ;
Thy marriage-joy begins for never-ending.”
While yet he spake, — the nuptial feast supplied, —
The bridegroom on the festive couch was bending
O'er Psyche in his bosom — Jove, the same,
On Juno, and the other deities, 10
Alike ranged round. The rural cup-boy came
And poured Jove's nectar out with shining eyes,
While Bacchus, for the others, did as much,
And Vulcan spread the meal ; and all the Hours
Made all things purple with a sprinkle of flowers,
Or roses chiefly, not to say the touch
Of their sweet fingers ; and the Graces glided
Their balm around, and the Muses, through the air,
Struck out clear voices, which were still divided
By that divinest song Apollo there 20
Intoned to his lute ; while Aphroditè fair
Did float her beauty along the tune, and play
The notes right with her feet. And thus, the
day
Through every perfect mood of joy was carried.
The Muses sang their chorus ; Satyrus
Did blow his pipes ; Pan touched his reed ; — and
thus
At last were Cupid and his Psyche married.

FROM NONNUS.

HOW BACCHUS FINDS ARIADNE SLEEPING.

(DIONYSIACA, LIB. XLVII.)

WHEN Bacchus first beheld the desolate
 And sleeping Ariadne, wonder straight
 Was mixed with love in his great golden eyes ;
 He turned to his Bacchantes in surprise,
 And said with guarded voice, — “ Hush ! strike no
 more

Your brazen cymbals ; keep those voices still
 Of voice and pipe ; and since ye stand before
 Queen Cypris, let her slumber as she will !
 And yet the cestus is not here in proof.
 A Grace, perhaps, whom sleep has stolen aloof : 10
 In which case, as the morning shines in view,
 Wake this Aglaia ! — yet in Naxos, who
 Would veil a Grace so ? Hush ! And if that she
 Were Hebe, which of all the gods can be
 The pourer-out of wine ? or if we think
 She’s like the shining moon by ocean’s brink,
 The guide of herds, — why, could she sleep without
 Endymion’s breath on her cheek ? or if I doubt
 Of silver-footed Thetis, used to tread
 These shores, — even *she* (in reverence be it said) 20
 Has no such rosy beauty to dress deep

With the blue waves. The Loxian goddess might
 Repose so from her hunting-toil aright

Beside the sea, since toil gives birth to sleep,
 But who would find her with her tunic loose,
 Thus ? Stand off, Thracian ! stand off ! Do not
 leap,

Not this way ! Leave that piping, since I choose,

O dearest Pan, and let Athenè rest !
 And yet if she be Pallas . . . truly guessed . . .
 Her lance is — where ? her helm and ægis — where ? ”
 — As Bacchus closed, the miserable Fair 31
 Awoke at last, sprang upward from the sands,
 And gazing wild on that wild throng that stands
 Around, around her, and no Theseus there ! —
 Here voice went moaning over shore and sea,
 Beside the halcyon's cry ; she called her love ;
 She named her hero, and raged maddeningly
 Against the brine of waters ; and, above,
 Sought the ship's track, and cursed the hours she
 slept ;
 And still the chiefest execration swept 40
 Against queen Paphia, mother of the ocean ;
 And cursed and prayed by times in her emotion
 The winds all round.
 Her grief did make her glorious ; her despair
 Adorned her with its weight. Poor wailing child !
 She looked like Venus when the goddess smiled
 At liberty of godship, debonair ;
 Poor Ariadne ! and her eyelids fair
 Hid looks beneath them lent her by Persuasion 49
 And every Grace, with tears of Love's own passion.
 She wept long ; then she spake : — “ Sweet sleep did
 come
 While sweetest Theseus went. Oh, glad and dumb,
 I wish he had left me still ! for in my sleep
 I saw his Athens, and did gladly keep
 My new bride-state within my 'Theseus' hall ;
 And heard the pomp of Hymen, and the call
 Of 'Ariadne, Ariadne,' sung
 In choral joy ; and there, with joy I hung

Spring-blossoms round love's altar ! — ay, and wore
 A wreath myself ; and felt *bim* evermore, 60
 Oh, evermore beside me, with his mighty
 Grave head bowed down in prayer to Aphrodite !
 Why, what a sweet, sweet dream ! *He* went with it,
 And left me here unwedded where I sit !
 Persuasion help me ! The dark night did make me
 A brideship, the fair morning takes away ;
 My Love had left me when the Hour did wake me ;
 And while I dreamed of marriage, as I say,
 And blest it well, my blessed Theseus left me :
 And thus the sleep, I loved so, has bereft me. 70
 Speak to me, rocks, and tell my grief to-day,
 Who stole my love of Athens ? ” . . .

HOW BACCHUS COMFORTS ARIADNE.

(DIONYSIACA, LIB. XLVII.)

THEN Bacchus' subtle speech her sorrow crossed : —
 “ O maiden, dost thou mourn for having lost
 The false Athenian heart ? and dost thou still
 Take thought of Theseus, when thou mayst at will
 Have Bacchus for a husband ? Bacchus bright !
 A god in place of mortal ! Yes, and though
 The mortal youth be charming in thy sight,
 That man of Athens cannot strive below,
 In beauty and valour, with my deity !
 Thou'lt tell me of the labyrinthine dweller, 10
 The fierce man-bull he slew : I pray thee, be,
 Fair Ariadne, the true deed's true teller,
 And mention thy clue's help ! because, forsooth,
 Thine armed Athenian hero had not found
 A power to fight on that prodigious ground,
 Unless a lady in her rosy youth

Had lingered near him : not to speak the truth
 Too definitely out till names be known —
 Like Paphia's — Love's — and Ariadne's own.
 Thou wilt not say that Athens can compare 20

With Æther, nor that Minos rules like Zeus,
 Nor yet that Gnosus has such golden air
 As high Olympus. Ha ! for noble use
 We came to Naxos ! Love has well intended
 To change thy bridegroom ! Happy thou, defended
 From entering in thy Theseus' earthly hall,
 That thou mayst hear the laughters rise and fall
 Instead, where Bacchus rules ! Or wilt thou
 choose

A still-surpassing glory ? — take it all, —
 A heavenly house, Kronion's self for kin, — 30
 A place where Cassiopea sits within
 Inferior light, for all her daughter's sake,
 Since Perseus, even amid the stars, must take
 Andromeda in chains æthereal !
 But *I* will wreath *thee*, sweet, an astral crown,
 And as my queen and spouse thou shalt be known —
 Mine, the crown-lover's ! " Thus, at length, he
 proved

His comfort on her ; and the maid was moved ;
 And casting Theseus' memory down the brine,
 She straight received the troth of her divine 40
 Fair Bacchus ; Love stood by to close the rite ;
 The marriage-chorus struck up clear and light,
 Flowers sprouted fast about the chamber green,
 And with spring-garlands on their heads, I ween,
 The Orchomenian dancers came along
 And danced their rounds in Naxos to the song.
 A Hamadryad sang a nuptial dit
 Right shrilly : and a Naiad sat beside

A fountain, with her bare foot shelving it,
 And hymned of Ariadne, beauteous bride, 50
 Whom thus the god of grapes had deified.
 Ortygia sang out, louder than her wont,
 An ode which Phœbus gave her to be tried,
 And leapt in chorus, with her steadfast front,
 While prophet Love, the stars have called a brother,
 Burnt in his crown, and twined in one another
 His love-flower with the purple roses, given
 In type of that new crown assigned in heaven.

FROM HESIOD.

BACCHUS AND ARIADNE.

(THEOG. 947.)

THE golden-haired Bacchus did espouse
 That fairest Ariadne, Minos' daughter,
 And made her wifehood blossom in the house ;
 Where such protective gifts Kronion brought her,
 Nor Death nor Age could find her when they sought
 her.

FROM EURIPIDES.

AURORA AND TITHONUS.

(TROADES, ANTISTROPHE, 853.)

LOVE, Love, who once didst pass the Dardan portals,
 Because of Heavenly passion !
 Who once didst lift up Troy in exultation,
 To mingle in thy bond the high Immortals ! —
 Love, turned from his own name
 To Zeus's shame,
 Can help no more at all.

And Eos' self, the fair, white-steeded Morning, —
Her light which blesses other lands, returning,
 Has changed to a gloomy pall ! 10
 She looked across the land with eyes of amber, —
 She saw the city's fall, —
 She who, in pure embraces,
 Had held there, in the hymeneal chamber,
 Her children's father, bright Tithonus old,
 Whom the four steeds with starry brows and paces
 Bore on, snatched upward, on the car of gold,
 And with him, all the land's full hope of joy !
 The love-charms of the gods are vain for Troy.

FROM HOMER.

HECTOR AND ANDROMACHE.

(ILIAD, LIB. VI.)

SHE rushed to meet him : the nurse following
 Bore on her bosom the unsaddened child,
 A simple babe, prince Hector's well-loved son,
 Like a star shining when the world is dark.
 Scamandrius, Hector called him ; but the rest
 Named him Astyanax, the city's prince,
 Because that Hector only had saved Troy.
 He, when he saw his son, smiled silently ;
 While, dropping tears, Andromache pressed on,
 And clung to his hand, and spake, and named his
 name. 10

“Hector, my best one, — thine own nobleness
 Must needs undo thee. Pity hast thou none
 For this young child, and this most sad myself,

Who soon shall be thy widow — since that soon
The Greeks will slay thee in the general rush —
And then, for me, what refuge, 'rest of *thee*,
But to go graveward ? Then, no comfort more
Shall touch me, as in the old sad times thou know'st —
Grief only — grief ! I have no father now,
No mother mild ! Achilles the divine, 20
He slew my father, sacked his lofty Thebes,
Cilicia's populous city, and slew its king,
Eëtion — father ! — did not spoil the corse,
Because the Greek revered him in his soul,
But burnt the body with its dædal arms,
And poured the dust out gently. Round that tomb
The Oreads, daughters of the goat-nursed Zeus,
Tripped in a ring, and planted their green elms.
There were seven brothers with me in the house,
Who all went down to Hades in one day, — 30
For *he* slew all, Achilles the divine,
Famed for his swift feet, — slain among their herds
Of cloven-footed bulls and flocking sheep !
My mother too, who queened it o'er the woods
Of Hippoplacia, he, with other spoil,
Seized, — and, for golden ransom, freed too late, —
Since, as she went home, arrowy Artemis
Met her and slew her at my father's door.
But — oh my Hector, — thou art still to me
Father and mother ! — yes, and brother dear, 40
O thou, who art my sweetest spouse beside !
Come now, and take me into pity ! Stay
I' the town here with us ! Do not make thy child
An orphan, nor a widow thy poor wife !
Call up the people to the fig-tree, where
The city is most accessible, the wall
Most easy of assault ! — for thrice thereby

The boldest Greeks have mounted to the breach,—
 Both Ajaxes, the famed Idomeneus,
 Two sons of Atreus, and the noble one 50
 Of Tydeus, — whether taught by some wise seer,
 Or by their own souls prompted and inspired.”

Great Hector answered : — “ Lady, for these things
 It is my part to care. And *I* fear most
 My Trojans, and their daughters, and their wives,
 Who through their long veils would glance scorn at me
 If, coward-like, I shunned the open war.
 Nor doth my own soul prompt me to that end !
 I learnt to be a brave man constantly,
 And to fight foremost where my Trojans fight, 60
 And vindicate my father’s glory and mine —
 Because I know, by instinct and my soul,
 The day comes that our sacred Troy must fall,
 And Priam and his people. Knowing which,
 I have no such grief for all my Trojans’ sake,
 For Hecuba’s, for Priam’s, our old king,
 Not for my brothers’, who so many and brave
 Shall bite the dust before our enemies, —
 As, sweet, for *thee* ! — to think some mailèd Greek
 Shall lead thee weeping and deprive thy life 70
 Of the free sun-sight — that, when gone away
 To Argos, thou shalt throw the distaff there,
 Not for thy uses — or shalt carry instead
 Upon thy loathing brow, as heavy as doom,
 The water of Greek wells — Messeis’ own,
 Or Hyperea’s ! — that some stander-by,
 Marking my tears fall, shall say, ‘ This is She,
 The wife of that same Hector who fought best
 Of all the Trojans, when all fought for Troy —’
 Ay ! — and, so speaking, shall renew thy pang 80

That, 'reft of Him so named, thou shouldst survive
 To a slave's life ! But earth shall hide my corse
 Ere that shriek sound, wherewith thou art dragged
 from Troy."

Thus Hector spake, and stretched his arms to his
 child.

Against the nurse's breast, with childly cry,
 The boy clung back, and shunned his father's face,
 And feared the glittering brass and waving hair
 Of the high helmet, nodding horror down.
 The father smiled, the mother could not choose
 But smile too. Then he lifted from his brow 90
 The helm, and set it on the ground to shine :
 Then, kissed his dear child — raised him with both
 arms,
 And thus invoked Zeus and the general gods : —

" Zeus, and all godships ! grant this boy of mine
 To be the 'Trojans' help, as I myself, —
 To live a brave life and rule well in Troy !
 Till men shall say, ' The son exceeds the sire
 By a far glory.' Let him bring home spoil
 Heroic, and make glad his mother's heart."

With which prayer, to his wife's extended arms 100
 He gave the child ; and she received him straight
 To her bosom's fragrance — smiling up her tears.
 Hector gazed on her till his soul was moved ;
 Then softly touched her with his hand and spake.
 " My best one — 'ware of passion and excess
 In any fear. There's no man in the world
 Can send me to the grave apart from fate, —

And no man . . . Sweet, I tell thee . . . can fly
fate —

No good nor bad man. Doom is self-fulfilled.
But now, go home, and ply thy woman's task 110
Of wheel and distaff! bid thy maidens haste
Their occupation. War's a care for men —
For all men born in Troy, and chief for me."
Thus spake the noble Hector, and resumed
His crested helmet, while his spouse went home;
But as she went, still looked back lovingly,
Dropping the tears from her reverted face.

THE DAUGHTERS OF PANDARUS.

(ODYSS., LIB. XX.)

AND so these daughters fair of Pandarus
The whirlwinds took. The gods had slain their kin :
They were left orphans in their father's house.
And Aphrodité came to comfort them
With incense, luscious honey, and fragrant wine ;
And Herè gave them beauty of face and soul
Beyond all women ; purest Artemis
Endowed them with her stature and white grace ;
And Pallas taught their hands to flash along
Her famous looms. Then, bright with deity, 10
Toward far Olympus, Aphrodité went
To ask of Zeus (who has his thunder-joys
And his full knowledge of man's mingled fate)
How best to crown those other gifts with love
And worthy marriage : but, what time she went,
The ravishing Harpies snatched the maids away,
And gave them up, for all their loving eyes,
To serve the Furies who hate constantly.

ANOTHER VERSION.

So the storms bore the daughters of Pandarus out into
 thrall —
 The gods slew their parents ; the orphans were left in
 the hall.
 And there, came, to feed their young lives, Aphro-
 ditè divine,
 With the incense, the sweet-tasting honey, the sweet-
 smelling wine ;
 Herè brought them her wit above woman's, and
 beauty of face ;
 And pure Artemis gave them her stature, that form
 might have grace :
 And Athenè instructed their hands in her works of
 renown ;
 Then, afar to Olympus, divine Aphroditè moved on :
 To complete other gifts, by uniting each girl to a mate,
 She sought Zeus, who has joy in the thunder and
 knowledge of fate, 10
 Whether mortals have good chance or ill. But the
 Harpies alate
 In the storm came, and swept off the maidens, and
 gave them to wait,
 With that love in their eyes, on the Furies who con-
 stantly hate.

FROM ANACREON.

ODE TO THE SWALLOW.

THOU indeed, little Swallow,
 A sweet yearly comer,
 Art building a hollow .
 New nest every summer,



PROTESTANT CEMETERY, FLORENCE



And straight dost depart
 Where no gazing can follow,
 Past Memphis, down Nile !
 Ah ! but Love all the while
 Builds his nest in my heart,
 Through the cold winter-weeks : 10
 And as one Love takes flight,
 Comes another, O Swallow,
 In an egg warm and white,
 And another is callow.
 And the large gaping beaks
 Chirp all day and all night :
 And the Loves who are older
 Help the young and the poor Loves,
 And the young Loves grown bolder
 Increase by the score Loves — 20
 Why, what can be done ?
 If a noise comes from one
 Can I bear all this rout of a hundred and more
 Loves ?

FROM HEINE.

THE LAST TRANSLATION.

(ROME, 1860.)

I.

I.

Our of my own great woe
 I make my little songs,
 Which rustle their feathers in throngs
 And beat on her heart even so.

II.

They found the way, for their part,
Yet come again, and complain :
Complain, and are not fain
To say what they saw in her heart.

II.

I.

ART thou indeed so adverse ?
Art thou so changed indeed ?
Against the woman who wrongs me
I cry to the world in my need.

10

II.

O recreant lips unthankful,
How could ye speak evil, say,
Of the man who so well has kissed you
On many a fortunate day ?

III.

I.

MY child, we were two children,
Small, merry by childhood's law ;
We used to crawl to the hen-house
And hide ourselves in the straw.

20

II.

We crowed like cocks, and whenever
The passers near us drew —
Cock-a-doodle ! they thought
'Twas a real cock that crew.

III.

The boxes about our courtyard
We carpeted to our mind,
And lived there both together —
Kept house in a noble kind.

IV.

The neighbour's old cat often
Came to pay us a visit ;
We made her a bow and curtesy,
Each with a compliment in it.

30

V.

After her health we asked,
Our care and regard to evince —
(We have made the very same speeches
To many an old cat since).

VI.

We also sat and wisely
Discoursed, as old folk do,
Complaining how all went better
In those good times we knew, —

40

VII.

How love and truth and believing
Had left the world to itself,
And how so dear was the coffee,
And how so rare was the pelf.

VIII.

The children's games are over,
 The rest is over with youth —
 The world, the good games, the good times,
 The belief, and the love, and the truth.

IV.

I.

THOU lovest me not, thou lovest me not !
 'Tis scarcely worth a sigh : 50
 Let me look in thy face, and no king in his place
 Is a gladder man than I.

II.

Thou hatest me well, thou hatest me well —
 Thy little red mouth has told :
 Let it reach me a kiss, and, however it is,
 My child, I am well consoled.

V.

I.

MY own sweet Love, if thou in the grave,
 The darksome grave, wilt be,
 Then will I go down by the side, and crave
 Love-room for thee and me. 60

II.

I kiss and caress and press thee wild,
 Thou still, thou cold, thou white !
 I wail, I tremble, and weeping mild,
 Turn to a corpse at the right.

III.

The Dead stand up, the midnight calls,
 They dance in airy swarms —
 We two keep still where the grave-shade falls,
 And I lie on in thine arms.

IV.

The Dead stand up, the Judgment-day
 Bids such to weal or woe — 70
 But nought shall trouble us where we stay
 Embraced and embracing below.

VI.

I.

THE years they come and go,
 The races drop in the grave,
 Yet never the love doth so
 Which here in my heart I have.

II.

Could I see thee but once, one day,
 And sink down so on my knee,
 And die in thy sight while I say,
 “Lady, I love but thee !” 80

THE GREEK CHRISTIAN POETS.

THE GREEK CHRISTIAN POETS.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following pieces, first printed in 1842 by the "Athenæum," are now reprinted with the liberal permission of that Journal.

It was intended by its Writer, that the account of the Greek Christian Poets should receive corrections, or certainly additions : a project which new objects of interest came to delay. The glancing series of notes upon the English Poets seems suggested by, as well as consequent upon, the account ; unless it arose from the publication of Wordsworth's "Poems of Early and Late Years, including The Borderers," — in the form of a review of which the latter part of the paper originally appeared : the former was occasioned by "The Book of the Poets," a compilation of the day.

Both performances, laid away long ago, and only lately unfolded for the first time, were perhaps almost forgotten by their Author ; but on the whole, in all likelihood, some way or other reproduction was desired : and this is effected accordingly.

A name, which occurs unworthily enough toward the close, should be withdrawn were it found possible : its presence may be pardoned, as serving at least to mark more dates than one.

LONDON : *February, 1863.*

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE GREEK
CHRISTIAN POETS.

THE Greek language was a strong intellectual life, stronger than any similar one which has lived in the breath of "articulately speaking men," and survived it. No other language has lived so long and died so hard, — pang by pang, each with a dolphin colour — yielding reluctantly to that doom of death and silence which must come at last to the speaker and the speech. Wonderful it is to look back fathoms down the great Past, thousands of years away — where whole generations lie unmade to dust — where the sounding of their trumpets, and the rushing of their scythed chariots, and that great shout which brought down the birds stone dead from beside the sun, are more silent than the dog breathing at our feet, or the fly's paces on our window-pane; and yet, from the heart of which silence, to feel *words* rise up like a smoke — words of men, even words of women, uttered at first, perhaps, in "excellent low voices," but audible and distinct to our times, through "the dreadful pother" of life and death, the hissing of the steam-engine and the crackling of the cerement! It is wonderful to look back and listen. Blind Homer spoke this Greek after blind Demodocus, with a quenchless light about his brows, which he felt through his blindness. Pindar rolled his chariots in it, prolonging the clamour of the games. Sappho's heart beat through it, and heaved up the world's. Æschylus strained it to the stature of his high thoughts. Plato crowned it with his divine per-adventures. Aristophanes made it drunk with the wine of his fantastic merriment. The latter Platonists wove their souls away in it, out of sight of other

souls. The first Christians heard in it God's new revelation, and confessed their Christ in it from the suppliant's knee, and presently from the bishop's throne. To all times, and their transitions, the language lent itself. Through the long summer of above two thousand years, from the grasshopper Homer sang of, to that grasshopper of Manuel Phile, which might indeed have been "a burden," we can in nowise mistake the chirping of the bloodless, deathless, wondrous creatures. It chirps on in Greek still. At the close of that long summer, though Greece lay withered to her root, her academic groves and philosophic gardens all leafless and bare, still from the depths of the desolation rose up the voice —

O cuckoo, shall I call thee bird,
Or but a wandering voice ?

which did not grow hoarse, like other cuckoos, but sang not unsweetly, if more faintly than before. Strangely vital was this Greek language —

Some straggling spirits were behind, to be
Laid out with most thrift on its memory.

It seemed as if nature could not part with so lovely a tune, as if she felt it ringing on still in her head — or as if she hummed it to herself, as the watchman used to do, with "night wandering round" him, when he watched wearily on the palace roof of the doomed house of Atreus.

But, although it is impossible to touch with a thought the last estate of Greek poetical literature without the wonder occurring of its being still Greek, still poetry, — though we are startled by the phenomenon of life-like

sounds coming up from the ashes of a mighty people — at the aspect of an Alcestis returned from the dead, *veiled* but identical, — we are forced to admit, after the first pause of admiration, that a change has passed upon the great thing we recognise, a change proportionate to the greatness, and involving a caducity. Therefore, in adventuring some imperfect account of the Greek ecclesiastical poets, it is right to premise it with the full and frank admission, that they are not accomplished poets, — that they do not, in fact, reach with their highest lifted hand, the lowest foot of those whom the world has honoured as Greek poets, but who have honoured the world more by their poetry. The instrument of the Greek tongue was, at the Christian era, an antique instrument, somewhat worn, somewhat stiff in the playing, somewhat deficient in notes which it had once, somewhat feeble and uncertain in such as it retained. The subtlety of the ancient music, the variety of its cadences, the intersections of sweetness in the rise and fall of melodies, rounded and contained in the unity of its harmony, are as utterly lost to this later period as the digamma was to an earlier one. We must not seek for them ; we shall not find them ; their place knows them no more. Not only was there a lack in the instrument, — there was also a deficiency in the players. Thrown aside, after the old flute-story, by a goddess, it was taken up by a mortal hand — by the hand of men gifted and noble in their generation, but belonging to it intellectually, even by their gifts and their nobleness. Another immortal, a true genius, might — nay, would — have asserted himself, and wrung a poem of almost the ancient force from the infirm instrument. It is easy to fancy, and to wish that it had been so — that some martyr or bishop, when

bishops were martyrs, and the earth was still warm with the Sacrificial blood, had been called to the utterance of his soul's devotion, with the emphasis of a great poet's power. No one, however, was so called. Of all the names which shall presently be reckoned, and of which it is the object of this sketch to give some account, beseeching its readers to hold several in honourable remembrance, not one can be crowned with a steady hand as a true complete poet's name. Such a crown is a sacred dignity, and, as it should not be touched idly, it must not be used here. A born Warwick could find, here, no head for a crown.

Yet we shall reckon names "for remembrance," and speak of things not ignoble — of meek heroic Christians, and heavenward faces washed serene by tears — strong knees bending humbly for the very strength's sake — bright intellects burning often to the winds in fantastic shapes, but oftener still with an honest inward heat, vehement on heart and brain — most eloquent fallible lips that convince us less than they persuade — a divine loquacity of human falsities — poetical souls, that are not souls of poets! Surely not ignoble things! And the reader will perceive at once that the writer's heart is not laid beneath the wheels of a cumbrous ecclesiastical antiquity — that its intent is to love what is lovable, to honour what is honourable, and to kiss both through the dust of centuries, but by no means to recognise a *hierarch*y, whether in the church or in literature.

If, indeed, an opinion on the former relation might be regarded here, it would be well to suggest, that to these "Fathers," as we call them filially, with heads turned away, we owe more reverence for the greyness

of their beards than theological gratitude for the outstretching of their hands. Devoted and disinterested as many among them were, they, themselves, were at most times evidently and consciously surer of their *love*, in a theologic sense, than of their knowledge in any. It is no place for a reference to religious controversy; and if it were, we are about to consider them simply as poets, without trenching on the very wide ground of their prose works and ecclesiastical opinions. Still one passing remark may be admissible, since the fact is so remarkable — how any body of Christian men can profess to derive their opinions from “the opinions of the Fathers,” when *all* bodies might do so equally. These fatherly opinions are, in truth, multiform, and multitudinous as the fatherly “sublime grey hairs.” There is not only a father apiece for every child, but, not to speak it unfilially, a piece of every father for every child. Justin Martyr would, of himself, set up a wilderness of sects, besides “something over” for the future ramifications of each several one. What then should be done with our “Fathers”? Leave them to perish by the time-Ganges, as old men innocent and decrepit, and worthy of no use or honour? Surely not. We may learn of them, if God will let us, *love*, and love is much — we may learn devotedness of them and warm our hearts by theirs; and this, although we rather distrust them as commentators, and utterly refuse them the reverence of our souls, in the capacity of theological oracles.

Their place in literature, which we have to do with to-day, may be found, perhaps, by a like moderation. That place is not, it has been admitted, of the highest; and that it is not of the lowest the proof will presently be attempted. There is a mid-air kingdom of the

birds called *Nephelococcygia*, of which Aristophanes tells us something; and we might stand there a moment so as to measure the local adaptitude, putting up the Promethean umbrella to hide us from the "Gods," if it were not for the "men and columns" lower down. But as it is, the very suggestion, if persisted in, would sink all the ecclesiastical antiquity it is desirable to find favour for, to all eternity, in the estimation of the kindest reader. No! the mid-air kingdom of the birds will not serve the wished-for purpose even illustratively, and by grace of the nightingale. "May the sweet saints pardon us" for wronging them by an approach to such a sense, which, if attained and determined, would have consigned them so certainly to what St. Augustine called — when *he* was moderate too — *mitissima damnatio*, a very mild species of damnation.

It would be, in fact, a rank injustice to the beauty we are here to recognise, to place these writers in the rank of mediocrities, supposing the harsh sense. They may be called mediocrities as poets among poets, but not so as no poets at all. Some of them may sing before gods and men, and in front of any column, from Trajan's to that projected one in Trafalgar Square, to which is promised the miraculous distinction of making the National Gallery sink lower than we see it now. They may, as a body, sing exultingly, holding the relation of column to gallery, in front of the whole "corpus" of Latin ecclesiastical poetry, and claim the world's ear and the poet's palm. That the modern Latin poets have been more read by scholars, and are better known by reputation to the general reader, is unhappily true: but the truth involves no good reason why it should be so, nor much marvel

that it is so. Besides the greater accessibility of Latin literature, the vicissitude of life is extended to posthumous fame, and Time, who is Justice to the poet, is sometimes too busy in pulverising bones to give the due weight to memories. The modern Latin poets, "elegant," — which is the critic's word to spend upon them, — elegant as they are occasionally, polished and accurate as they are comparatively, stand cold and lifeless, with statue-eyes, near these good, fervid, faulty Greeks of ours — and we do not care to look again. Our Greeks do, in their degree, claim their ancestral advantage, not the mere advantage of language, — nay, least the advantage of language — a comparative elegance and accuracy of expression being ceded to the Latins — but that higher distinction inherent in brain and breast, of vivid thought and quick sensibility. What if we swamp for a moment the Tertullians and Prudentiuses, and touch, by a permitted anachronism, with one hand VIDA, with the other GREGORY NAZIANZEN, what then? What though the Italian poet be smooth as the Italian Canova — working like him out of stone — smooth and cold, disdaining to ruffle his dactyls with the beating of his pulses — what then? Would we change for him our sensitive Gregory, with all his defects in the glorious "scientia metrica"? We would not — perhaps we should not, even if those defects were not attributable, as Mr. Boyd, in the preface to his work on the Fathers, most justly intimates, to the changes incident to a declining language.

It is, too, as religious poets that we are called upon to estimate these neglected Greeks — as religious poets, of whom the universal church and the world's literature would gladly embrace more names than can be

counted to either. For it is strange that, although Wilhelm Meister's uplooking and downlooking aspects, the reverence to things about and things below, the religious all-clasping spirit, be, and must be, in degree and measure, the grand necessity of every true poet's soul, — of religious poets, strictly so called, the earth is very bare. Religious "parcel-poets" we have, indeed, more than enough; writers of hymns, translators of scripture into prose, or of prose generally into rhymes, of whose heart-devotion a higher faculty were worthy. Also there have been poets, not a few, singing as if earth were still Eden; and poets, many, singing as if in the first hour of exile, when the echo of the curse was louder than the whisper of the promise. But the right "genius of Christianity" has done little up to this moment, even for Chateaubriand. We want the touch of Christ's hand upon our literature, as it touched other dead things — we want the sense of the saturation of Christ's blood upon the souls of our poets, that it may cry *through* them in answer to the ceaseless wail of the Sphinx of our humanity, expounding agony into renovation. Something of this has been perceived in art when its glory was at the fullest. Something of a yearning after this may be seen among the Greek Christian poets, something which would have been *much* with a stronger faculty. It will not harm us in any case, as lovers of literature and honest judges, if we breathe away, or peradventure *besom* away, the thick dust which lies upon their heavy folios, and besom away, or peradventure *breathe* away, the inward intellectual dust, which must be confessed to lie thickly, too, upon the heavy poems, and make our way softly and meekly into the heart of such hidden beauties (hidden and scattered) as our good luck, or

no *vates* in the ancient sense. A Greek tragedy (and some fragments of a tragedy are all that we hold of him), by a Jew, and on a Jewish subject, "The Exodus from Egypt," may startle the most serene of us into curiosity — with which curiosity begins and ends the only strong feeling we can bring to bear upon the work ; since, if the execution of it is somewhat curious too, there is a gentle collateral dulness which effectually secures us from feverish excitement. Moses prologises after the worst manner of Euripides (worse than the worse), compendiously relating his adventures among the bulrushes and in Pharaoh's household, concluded by his slaying an Egyptian, *because nobody was looking*. So saith the poet. Then follows an interview between the Israelite and Zipporah, and her companions, wherein he puts to her certain geographical questions, and she (as far as we can make out through fragmentary cracks) rather *brusquely* proposes their mutual marriage ; on which subject he does not venture an opinion ; but we find him next confiding his dreams in a family fashion to her father, who considers them satisfactory. Here occurs a broad crack down the tragedy — and we are suddenly called to the revelation from the bush by an extraordinarily ordinary dialogue, between Deity and Moses. It is a surprising specimen of the kind of composition adverted to some lines ago, as the translation of Scripture into prose ; and the sublime simplicity of the scriptural narrative being thus done (away) into Greek for a certain time, the following reciprocation — to which our old moralities can scarcely do more, or less, than furnish a parallel — prays for an English — exposure. The Divine Being is supposed to address Moses : —

But what is this thou holdest in thine hand? —
Let thy reply be sudden.

Moses. 'Tis my rod —

I chasten with it quadrupeds and men.

Voice from the Bush. Cast it upon the ground —
and straight recoil ;

For it shall be, to move thy wonderment,

A terrible serpent.

Moses. It is cast. But THOU,

Be gracious to me, Lord. How terrible !

How monstrous ! Oh, be pitiful to me !

I shudder to behold it, my limbs shake.

The reader is already consoled for the destiny which mutilated the tragedy, without requiring the last words of the analysis. Happily characteristic of the "meekest of men" is Moses's naïve admission of the uses of his rod — to beat men and animals withal — of course "when nobody is looking."

CLEMENS ALEXANDRINUS, to whom we owe whatever gratitude is due for our fragmentary Ezekiel, was originally an Athenian philosopher, afterwards a converted Christian, a Presbyter of the Church at Alexandria, and preceptor of the famous Origen. Clemens flourished at the close of the second century. As a prose writer — and we have no prose writings of his, except such as were produced subsequently to his conversion — he is learned and various. His "Pedagogue" is a wanderer, to universal intents and purposes ; and his "Tapestry," if the "Stromata" may be called so, is embroidered in all cross-stitches of philosophy, with not much scruple as to the shading of colours. In the midst of all is something, ycleped a dithyrambic ode, addressed to the Saviour, composite of fantastic epithets in the mode of the old litanies,

and almost as bald of merit as the Jew-Greek drama, though Clemens himself (worthier in worthier places) be the poet. Here is the opening, which is less fanciful than what follows it : —

Curb for wild horses,
 Wing for bird-courses
 Never yet flown !
 Helm, safe for weak ones,
 Shepherd, bespeak once,
 The young lambs thine own.
 Rouse up the youth,
 Shepherd and feeder,
 So let them bless thee,
 Praise and confess thee, —
 Pure words on pure mouth, —
 Christ, the child-leader !
 O, the saints' Lord,
 All-dominant word !
 Holding, by Christdom,
 God's highest wisdom !
 Column in place
 When sorrows seize us, —
 Endless in grace
 Unto man's race,
 Saving one, Jesus !
 Pastor and ploughman,
 Helm, curb, together, —
 Pinion that now can
 (Heavenly of feather)
 Raise and release us, —
 Fisher who catcheth
 Those whom he watcheth

It goes on ; but we need not do so. "By the pricking of our thumbs," we know that the reader has had enough of it.

Passing rapidly into the fourth century, we would offer our earliest homage to Gregory Nazianzen,

That name must ever be to us a friend,

when the two APOLINARII cross our path and intercept the "all hail." Apolinarius the grammarian, formerly of Alexandria, held the office of presbyter in the church of Laodicæa, and his son Apolinarius, an accomplished rhetorician, that of *reader*, an ancient ecclesiastical office, in the same church. This younger Apolinarius was a man of indomitable energies and most practical inferences; and when the edict of Julian forbade to the Christians the study of Grecian letters, he, assisted perhaps by his father's hope and hand, stood strong in the gap, not in the attitude of supplication, not with the gesture of consolation, but in power and sufficiency to fill up the void and baffle the tyrant. Both father and son were in the work, by some testimony; the younger Apolinarius standing out, by all, as the chief worker, and only one in any extensive sense. "Does Julian deny us Homer?" said the brave man in his armed soul — "I am Homer!" and straightway he turned the whole Biblical history, down to Saul's accession, into Homeric hexameters, — dividing the work, so as to clench the identity of first and second Homers, into twenty-four books, each superscribed by a letter of the alphabet, and the whole acceptable, according to the expression of Sozomen, ἀντὶ τῆς Ὁμήρου ποιήσεως, in the place of Homer's poetry. "Does Julian deny us Euripides?" said Apolinarius again — "I am Euripides!" and up he sprang, — as good an Euripides (who can doubt it?) as he ever was a Homer. "Does Julian

forbid us Menander ? — Pindar ? — Plato ? — I am Menander ! — I am Pindar ! — I am Plato ! ” And comedies, lyrics, philosophics, flowed fast at the word ; and the gospels and epistles adapted themselves naturally to the rules of Socratic disputation. A brave man, forsooth, was our Apolinarius of Laodicæa, and literally a man of men — for observe, says Sozomen, with a venerable innocence, at which the gravest may smile gravely, — as at a doublet worn awry at the Council of Nice, — that the old authors did each man his own work, whereas this Apolinarius did every man’s work in addition to his own — and so admirably — intimates the ecclesiastical critic, — that if it were not for the common prejudice in favour of antiquity, no ancient could be missed in the all comprehensive representativeness of the Laodicæan writer. So excellent was his ability, to “ outbrave the stars in several kinds of light,” besides the Cæsar ! Whether Julian, naturally mortified to witness this germination of illustrious heads under the very iron of his searing, vowed vengeance against the Hydra-spirit, by the sacred memory of the animation of his own beard, we do not exactly know. To embitter the wrong, Apolinarius sent him a treatise upon truth — a confutation of the pagan doctrine, apart from the scriptural argument, — the Emperor’s notice of which is both worthy of his Cæsar-ship, and a good model-notice for all sorts of critical dignities. *Ἀνέγνων ἔγνω κατέγνω*, is the Greek of it ; so that, turning from the letter to catch something of the point, we may write it down — “ I have perused, I have mused, I have abused ” : which provoked as imperious a retort — “ Thou mayest have perused, but thou hast not mused ; for hadst thou mused, thou wouldst not have abused.” Brave Laodicæan !

Apolinarius's laudable *double* of Greek literature has perished, the reader will be concerned to hear, from the face of the earth, being, like other *lusus*, or marvels, or monsters, brief of days. One only tragedy remains, with which the memory of Gregory Nazianzen has been right tragically affronted, and which Gregory, — *el τις αισθησις*, as he said of Constantine, — would cast off with the scorn and anger befitting an Apolinarian heresy. For Apolinarius, besides being an epist, dramatist, lyrist, philosopher, and rhetorician, was, we are sorry to add, in the eternal bustle of his soul, a heretic, — possibly for the advantage of something additional to do. He not only intruded into the churches hymns which were not authorised, being his own composition — so that reverend brows grew dark to hear women with musical voices sing them softly to the turning of their distaff, — but he fell into the heresy of denying a human soul to the perfect MAN, and of leaving the Divinity in bare combination with the Adamic dust. No wonder that a head so beset with many thoughts and individualities should at last turn round ! — that eyes rolling in fifty fine frenzies of twenty-five fine poets should at last turn blind ! — that a determination to rival all geniuses should be followed by a disposition more baleful in its exercise, to understand “all mysteries” ! Nothing can be plainer than the step after step, whereby, through excess of vain-glory and morbid mental activity, Apolinarius, the vice-poet of Greece, subsided into Apolinarius the chief heretic of Christendom.

To go back sighingly to the tragedy, where we shall have to sigh again — the only tragedy left to us of all the tragic works of Apolinarius (but we do not sigh for *that* !) — let no voice ever more attribute it

to Gregory Nazianzen. How could Mr. Alford do so, however hesitatingly, in his "Chapters," attaching to it, without the hesitation, a charge upon the writer, whether Gregory or another man, that *be*, whoever he was, had, of his own free will and choice, destroyed the old Greek originals out of which his tragedy was constructed, and left it a monument of their sacrifice as of the blood on his barbarian hand? The charge passes, not only before a breath, but before its own breath. The tragedy is, in fact, a specimen of *centoism*, which is the adaptation of the phraseology of one work to the construction of another; and we have only to glance at it to perceive the *Medæa* of Euripides dislocated into the *CHRISTUS PATIENS*. Instead of the ancient opening —

Oh, would ship Argo had not sailed away
To Colchos by the rough Symplegades!
Nor ever had been felled in Pelion's grove
The pine, hewn for her side! . . .
So she my queen,
Medæa, had not touched this fatal shore,
Soul-struck by love of Jason!

Apolinarius opens it thus —

Oh, would the serpent had not glode along
To Eden's garden-land, — nor ever had
The crafty dragon planted in that grove
A slimy snare! So she, rib-born of man,
The wretched misled mother of our race,
Had dared not to dare on beyond worst daring,
Soul-struck by love of — apples!

"Let us alone for keeping our countenance" —
and at any rate we are bound to ask gravely of Mr.

Alford, *is the Medæa destroyed?* — and if not, did the author of the “Christus Patiens” destroy his originals? and if not, may we not say of Mr. Alford’s charge against that author, “Oh, would he had not made it!” So far from Apolinarius being guilty of destroying his originals, it was his reverence for them which struggled with the edict of the persecutor, and accomplished this dramatic adventure; — and this adventure, the only remaining specimen of his adventurousness, may help us to the secret of his wonderful fertility and omni-representativeness, which is probably this — that the great majority of his works, tragic, comic, lyric, and philosophic, consisted simply of *centos*. Yet we pray for justice to Apolinarius: we pray for honour to his motives and energies. Without pausing to inquire whether it had been better and wiser to let poetry and literature depart at once before the tyranny of the edict, than to drag them back by the hair into attitudes grotesquely ridiculous — better and wiser for the Greek Christian schools to let them forgo altogether the poems of their Euripides, than adapt to the meek sorrows of the tender Virgin-mother, the bold, bad, cruel frenzy of Medæa, in such verses as these —

She howls out ancient oaths, invokes the faith
Of pledged right-hands, and calls, for witness, God!

— we pray straightforwardly for justice and honour to the motives and energies of Apolinarius. “Oh, would that” many lived *now* as appreciative of the influences of poetry on our schools and country, as impatient of their contraction, as self-devoted in the great work of extending them! There remains of his poetical labours, besides the tragedy, a translation of David’s Psalms into “heroic verse,” which the writer of

these remarks has not seen, — and of which those critics who desire to deal gently with Apolinarius seem to begin their indulgence by doubting the authenticity.

It is pleasant to turn shortly round, and find ourselves face to face, not with the author of “Christus Patiens,” but with one antagonistical both to his poetry and his heresy, GREGORY NAZIANZEN. A noble and tender man was this Gregory, and so tender, because so noble; a man to lose no cubit of his stature for being looked at steadfastly, or struck at reproachfully. “You may cast me down,” he said, “from my bishop’s throne, but you cannot banish me from before God’s.” And bishop as he was, his saintly crown stood higher than his tiara, and his loving martyr-smile, the crown of a nature more benign than his fortune, shone up toward both. Son of the bishop of Nazianzen, and holder of the diocese which was his birthplace, previous to his elevation to the level of the storm in the bishopric of Constantinople, little did he care for bishoprics or high places of any kind, — the desire of his soul being for solitude, quietude, and that silent religion which should “rather be than seem.” But his father’s head bent whitely before him, even in the chamber of his brother’s death, — and Basil, his beloved friend, the “half of his soul,” pressed on him with the weight of love; and Gregory, feeling their tears upon his cheeks, did not count his own, but took up the priestly office. Poor Gregory! not merely as a priest, but as a man, he had a sighing life of it. His student days at Athens, where he and Basil read together poems and philosophies, and holier things, or talked low and *misogonistically* of their fellow-student Julian’s bearded boding smile, were his happiest days. He says of himself,

As many stones
Were thrown at *me*, as other men had flowers.

Nor was persecution the worst evil ; for friend after friend, beloved after beloved, passed away from before his face, and the voice which charmed them living spoke brokenly beside their graves, — his funeral orations marked severally the wounds of his heart, — and his genius served, as genius often does, to lay an emphasis on his grief. The passage we shall venture to translate is rather a cry than a song —

Where are my wingèd words ? Dissolved in air.
Where is my flower of youth ? All withered. Where
My glory ? Vanished. Where the strength I knew
From comely limbs ? Disease hath changed it too,
And bent them. Where the riches and the lands ?
GOD HATH THEM ! Yea, and sinners' snatching hands
Have grudged the rest. Where is my father, mother,
And where my blessed sister, my sweet brother ?
Gone to the grave ! — There did remain for me
Alone my fatherland, till destiny,
Malignly stirring a black tempest, drove
My foot from that last rest. And now I rove
Estranged and desolate a foreign shore,
And drag my mournful life and age all hoar
Throneless and cityless, and childless save
This father-care for children, which I have,
Living from day to day on wandering feet.
Where shall I cast this body ? What will greet
My sorrows with an end ? What gentle ground
And hospitable grave will wrap me round ?
Who last my dying eyelids stoop to close —
Some saint, the Saviour's friend ? or one of those
Who do not know him ? The air interpose,
And scatter these words too.

The return upon the first thought is highly pathetic ; and there is a restlessness of anguish about the whole passage which consecrates it with the cross of nature. His happy Athenian associations gave a colour, unwashed out by tears, to his mind and works. Half apostolical he was, and half scholastical ; and while he mused, on his bishop's throne, upon the mystic tree of twelve fruits, and the shining of the river of life, he carried, as Milton did, with a gentle and not ungraceful distraction, both hands full of green trailing branches from the banks of the Cephissus, nay, from the very plane-tree which Socrates sat under with Phædrus, when they two talked about beauty to the rising and falling of its leaves. As an orator, he was greater, all must feel if some do not think, than his contemporaries ; and the "golden mouth" might confess it meekly. Erasmus compares him to Isocrates, but the unlikeness is obvious : Gregory was not excellent at an artful blowing of the pipes. He spoke grandly, as the wind does, in gusts ; and, as in a mighty wind, which combines unequal noises, the creaking of trees and rude swinging of doors as well as the sublime sovereign rush along the valleys, we gather the idea, from his eloquence, less of music than of power. Not that he is cold as the wind is — the metaphor goes no further : Gregory cannot be cold, even by disfavour of his antithetic points. He is various in his oratory, full and rapid in allusion, briefly graphic in metaphor, equally sufficient for indignation or pathos, and gifted peradventure with a keener dagger of sarcasm than should hang in a saint's girdle. His orations against Julian have all these characteristics, but they are not poetry, and we must pass down lower, and quite over his beautiful letters, to Gregory the poet.

He wrote *thirty thousand verses*, among which are several long poems, severally defective in a defect common but not necessary to short occasional poems, and lamentable anywhere, a want of unity and completeness. The excellences of his prose are transcribed, with whatever faintness, in his poetry — the exaltation, the devotion, the sweetness, the pathos, even to the playing of satirical power about the graver meanings. But although noble thoughts break up the dullness of the groundwork, — although, with the instinct of greater poets, he bares his heart in his poetry, and the heart is worth baring, still monotony of construction without unity of intention is the most wearisome of monotones, and, except in the case of a few short poems, we find it everywhere in Gregory. The lack of variety is extended to the cadences, and the pauses fall stiffly “*come corpo morto cade*.” Melodious lines we have often: harmonious passages scarcely ever — the music turning heavily on its own axle, as inadequate to living evolution. The poem on his own life (“*De Vitâ suâ*”) is, in many places, interesting and affecting, yet faulty with all these faults. The poem on Celibacy, which state is commended by Gregory as becometh a bishop, has occasionally graphic touches, but is dull enough generally to suit the fairest spinster’s view of that melancholy subject. If Hercules could have read it, he must have rested in the middle — from which the reader is entreated to forbear the inference that the poem has not been read through by the writer of the present remarks, seeing that that writer marked the grand concluding moment with a white stone, and laid up the memory of it among the chief triumphs, to say nothing of the fortunate deliverances, *vita sua*. In Gregory’s elegiac

poems, our ears, at least, are better contented, because the sequence of pentameter to hexameter necessarily excludes the various cadence which they yearn for under other circumstances. His anacreontics are sometimes nobly written, with a certain brave recklessness, as if the thoughts despised the measure — and we select from this class a specimen of his poetry, both because three of his hymns have already appeared in the “Athenæum,” and because the anacreontic in question includes to a remarkable extent the various qualities we have attributed to Gregory, not omitting that play of satirical humour with which he delights to ripple the abundant flow of his thoughts. The writer, though also a translator, feels less misgiving than usual in offering to the reader, in such English as is possible, this spirited and beautiful poem.

SOUL AND BODY.

What wilt thou possess or be?
 O my soul, I ask of thee.
 What of great, or what of small,
 Counted precious therewithal?
 Be it only rare, and want it,
 I am ready, soul, to grant it.
 Wilt thou choose to have and hold
 Lydian Gyges' charm of old,
 So to rule us with a ring,
 Turning round the jewelled thing,
 Hidden by its face concealed,
 And revealed by its revealed?
 Or preferrest Midas' fate —
 He who died in golden state,
 All things being changed to gold?
 Of a golden hunger dying,
 Through a surfeit of “would I” -ing!

Wilt have jewels brightly cold,
 Or may fertile acres please ?
 Or the sheep of many a fold,
 Camels, oxen, for the wold ?
 Nay ! I will not give thee these !
 These to take thou hast not will,
 These to give I have not skill ;
 Since I cast earth's cares abroad,
 That day when I turned to God.

Wouldst a throne, a crown sublime,
 Bubble blown upon the time ?
 So thou mayest sit to-morrow
 Looking downward in meek sorrow,
 Some one walking by thee scorning
 Who adored thee yester morning,
 Some malign one ? Wilt be bound
 Fast in marriage (joy unsound !)
 And be turned round and round
 As the time turns ? Wilt thou catch it,
 That sweet sickness ? and to match it
 Have babies by the hearth, bewildering ?
 And if I tell thee the best children
 Are none — what answer ?

Wilt thou thunder

Thy rhetorics, move the people under ?
 Covetest to sell the laws
 With no justice in thy cause,
 And bear on, or else be borne,
 Before tribunals worthy scorn ?
 Wilt thou shake a javelin rather
 Breathing war ? or wilt thou gather
 Garlands from the wrestler's ring ?
 Or kill beasts for glorying ?
 Covetest the city's shout,
 And to be in brass struck out ?
 Cravest thou that shade of dreaming,
 Passing air of shifting seeming,

Rushing of a printless arrow,
 Clapping echo of a hand ?
 What to those who understand
 Are to-day's enjoyments narrow
 Which to-morrow go again,
 Which are shared with evil men,
 And of which no man in his dying
 Taketh aught for softer lying ?
 What then wouldst thou, if thy mood
 Choose not these ? what wilt thou be
 O my soul — a deity ?
 A God before the face of God,
 Standing glorious in His glories,
 Choral in His angels' chorus ?

Go ! upon thy wing arise,
 Plumèd by quick energies,
 Mount in circles up the skies :
 And I will bless thy wingèd passion,
 Help with words thine exaltation,
 And, like a bird of rapid feather,
 Outlaunch thee, Soul, upon the æther.

But thou, O fleshly nature, say,
 Thou with odours from the clay,
 Since thy presence I must have
 As a lady with a slave,
 What wouldst thou possess or be,
 That thy breath may stay with thee ?
 Nay ! I owe thee nought beside,
 Though thine hands be open wide.
 Would a table suit thy wishes,
 Fragrant with sweet oils and dishes
 Wrought to subtle niceness ? where
 Stringèd music strokes the air,
 And blithe hand-clappings, and the smooth
 Fine postures of the tender youth
 And virgins wheeling through the dance

With an unveiled countenance, —
 Joys for drinkers, who love shame,
 And the maddening wine-cup's flame.
 Wilt thou such, howe'er decried?
 Take them, — and a rope beside!

Nay! this boon I give instead
 Unto friend insatiated, —
 May some rocky house receive thee,
 Self-roofed, to conceal thee chiefly;
 Or if labour there must lurk,
 Be it by a short day's work!
 And for garment, camel's hair,
 As the righteous clothed were,
 Clothe thee! or the bestial skin
 Adam's bareness hid within, —
 Or some green thing from the way,
 Leaf of herb, or branch of vine,
 Swelling, purpling as it may,
 Fearless to be drunk for wine!
 Spread a table there beneath thee,
 Which a sweetness shall upbreathe thee,
 And which the dearest earth is giving,
 Simple present to all living!
 When that we have placed thee near it,
 We will feed thee with glad spirit.
 Wilt thou eat? soft, take the bread,
 Oaten cake, if that bested;
 Salt will season all aright,
 And thine own good appetite,
 Which we measure not, nor fetter:
 'Tis an uncooked condiment,
 Famine's self the only better.
 Wilt thou drink? why, here doth bubble
 Water from a cup unspent,
 Followed by no tipsy trouble,
 Pleasure sacred from the grape!
 Wilt thou have it in some shape

More like luxury ? we are
 No grudgers of wine-vinegar !
 But if all will not suffice thee,
 And thou covetest to draw
 In that pitcher with a flaw,
 Brimful pleasures heaven denies thee —
 Go, and seek out, by that sign,
 Other help than this of mine !
 For me, I have not leisure so
 To warm thee, Sweet, my household foe,
 Until, like a serpent frozen,
 New-maddened with the heat, thou loosen
 Thy rescued fang within mine heart !
 Wilt have measureless delights
 Of gold-roofed palaces, and sights
 From pictured or from sculptured art,
 With motion near their life ; and splendour
 Of bas-relief, with tracery tender,
 And varied and contrasted hues ?
 Wilt thou have, as nobles use,
 Broidered robes to flow about thee ?
 Jewelled fingers ? Need we doubt thee ?
 Gauds for which the wise will flout thee ?
 I most, who, of all beauty, know
 It must be inward, to be so !
 And thus I speak to mortals low,
 Living for the hour, and o'er
 Its shadow, seeing nothing more :
 But for those of nobler bearing,
 Who live more worthily of wearing
 A portion of the heavenly nature —
 To low estate of clayey creature,
 See, I bring the beggar's meed,
 Nutriment beyond the need !
 O, beholder of the Lord,
 Prove on me the flaming sword !
 Be mine husbandman, to nourish
 Holy plants, that words may flourish

Of which mine enemy would spoil me,
 Using pleasurehood to foil me !
 Lead me closer to the tree
 Of all life's eternity ;
 Which, as I have pondered, is
 The knowledge of God's greatnesses :
 Light of One, and shine of Three,
 Unto whom all things that be
 Flow and tend !

In such a guise,
 Whoever on the earth is wise
 Will speak unto himself : and who
 Such inner converse would eschew, —
 We say perforce of that poor wight,
 " He lived in vain ! " and if *aright*,
 It is not the worst word we might.

AMPHILOCHIUS, bishop of Iconium, was beloved and much appreciated by Gregory, and often mentioned in his writings. Few of the works of Amphilochius are extant, and of these only one is a poem. It is a didactic epistle to Seleucus, "On the Right Direction of his Studies and Life," and has been attributed to Gregory Nazianzen by some writers, upon very inadequate evidence, — that adduced (the similar phraseology which conveys, in this poem and a poem of Gregory's, the catalogue of canonical scriptures), being as easily explained by the imitation of one poet, as by the identity of two. They differ, moreover, upon ground more important than phraseology : Amphilochius appearing to reject, or at least to receive doubtfully, Jude's epistle, and the Second of Peter. And there is a harsh force in the whole poem, which does not remind us of our Nazianzen, while it becomes, in the course of dissuading Seleucus from the amusements of the amphitheatre, graphic and

effective. We hear, through the description, the grinding of the tigers' teeth, the sympathy of the people with the tigers showing still more *savage*.

They sit unknowing of these agonies,
Spectators at a show. When a man flies
From a beast's jaw, they groan, as if at least
They missed the ravenous pleasure, like the *beast*,
And sat there vainly. When, in the next spring,
The victim is attained, and, uttering
The deep roar or quick shriek between the fangs,
Beats on the dust the passion of his pangs,
All pity dieth in that glaring look.
They clap to see the blood run like a brook ;
They stare with hungry eyes, which tears should fill,
And cheer the beasts on with their soul's good will ;
And wish more victims to their maw, and urge
And lash their fury, as they shared the surge,
Gnashing their teeth, like beasts, on the flesh of men.

There is an appalling reality in this picture. The epistle consists of 333 lines, which we mention specifically, because the poet takes advantage of the circumstance to illustrate or enforce an important theological doctrine :—

Three hundred lines, three decads, monads three,
Comprise my poem. *Love the Trinity.*

It would be almost a pain, and quite a regret, to pass from this fourth century without speaking a word which belongs to it — a word which rises to our lips, a word worthy of honour — HELIODORUS. Though a bishop and an imaginative writer, his “*Æthiopica*” has no claim on our attention, either by right of Christianity or poetry ; and yet we may be pardoned on our part for love's sake, and on account of the false

position into which, by negligence of readers or insufficiency of translators, his beautiful romance has fallen, if we praise it heartily and faithfully even here. Our tears praised it long ago, our recollection does so now, and its own pathetic eloquence and picturesque descriptiveness are ripe for any praise. It has, besides, a vivid Arabian Night charm, almost as charming as Scheherazade herself, suggestive of an Arabian Night story drawn out "in many a winding bout," and not merely on the ground of extemporaneous loving and methodical (must we say it?) *lying*. In good sooth — no, not in good sooth, but in evil leasing — every hero and heroine of them all, from Abou Hassan to "the divine Chariclæa," does lie most vehemently and abundantly by gift of nature and choice of author, whether bishop or sultana. "It is," as Pepys observes philosophically of the comparative destruction of gin-shops and churches in the Great Fire of London, "pretty to observe" how they all lie. And although the dearest of story-tellers, our own Chaucer, has told us that "some leasing is, of which there cometh none advantage to no wight," even that species is used by them magnanimously in its turn, for the bare glory's sake, and without caring for the "advantage." With equal liberality, but more truth, we write down the bishop of Tricca's romance *charming*, and wish the charm of it (however we may be out of place in naming him among poets,) upon any poet who has not yet felt it, and whose eyes, giving honour, may wander over these Remarks. The poor bishop thought as well of his book as we do, perhaps better; for when commanded, under ecclesiastical censure, to burn it or give up his bishopric, he gave up the bishopric. And who blames Heliodorus? He thought well of

his romance ; he was angry with those who did not ; he was weak with the love of it. Let whosoever blames, speak low. Romance-writers are not educated for martyrs, and the exacted martyrdom was very very hard. Think of that English bishop who burnt his hand by an act of volition — only his hand, and which was sure to be burnt afterwards ; and how he was praised for it ! Heliodorus had to do with a dearer thing — handwriting, not hands. Authors will pardon him, if bishops do not.

NONNUS of Panopolis, the poet of the “Dionysiaca,” a work of some twenty-two thousand verses, on some twenty-two thousand subjects shaken together, flourished, as people say of many a dry-rooted soul, at the commencement of the fifth century. He was converted from paganism, but we are sorry to make the melancholy addition, that he was never converted from the “Dionysiaca.” The only Christian poem we owe to him — a paraphrase, in hexameters, of the apostle John’s gospel — does all that a bald verbosity and an obscure tautology can do or undo, to quench the divinity of that divine narrative.

The two well-known words, bearing on their brief vibration the whole passion of a world saved through pain from pain, are thus *translated* : —

They answered him
“Come and behold.” *Then Jesus himself groaned,
Dropping strange tears from eyes unused to weep.*

“Unused to weep !” *Was it so of the Man of Sorrows ? Oh, obtuse poet ! We had translated the opening passage of the Paraphrase, and laid it by for transcription, but are repelled. Enough is said. Nonnus was never converted from the “Dionysiaca.”*

SYNESIUS of Cyrene learnt Plato's philosophy so well of Hypatia of Alexandria at the commencement of the fifth century, or rather before, that, to the obvious honour of that fair and learned teacher, he never, as bishop of Ptolemais, could attain to unlearning it. He did not wish to be bishop of Ptolemais; he had divers objections to the throne and the domination. He loved his dogs, he loved his wife; he loved Hypatia and Plato as well as he loved truth; and he loved beyond all things, under the womanly instruction of the former, to have his own way. He was a poet, too; the chief poet, we do not hesitate to record our opinion, — the chief, for true and natural gifts, of all our Greek Christian poets; and it was his choice to pray lyrically between the dew and the cloud rather than preach dogmatically between the doxies. If Gregory shrank from the episcopal office through a meek self-distrust and a yearning for solitude, Synesius repulsed the invitation to it through an impatience of control over heart and life, and for the earnest joy's sake of thinking out his own thought in the hunting-grounds, with no deacon or disciple astuter than his dog to watch the thought in his face, and trace it backward or forward, as the case might be, into something more or less than what was orthodox. Therefore he, a man of many and wandering thoughts, refused the bishopric, — not weepingly, indeed, as Gregory did, nor feigning madness with another of the "*nolentes episcopari*" of that earnest period, — but with a sturdy enunciation of resolve, more likely to be effectual, of keeping his wife by his side as long as he lived, and of doubting as long as he pleased to doubt upon the resurrection of the body. But Synesius was a man of genius, and of all

such true energies as are taken for granted in the name; and the very sullenness of his "nay" being expressive to grave judges of the faithfulness of his "yea and amen," he was considered too noble a man not to be made a bishop of in his own despite, and on his own terms. The fact proves the latitude of discipline, and even of doctrine, permitted to the churches of that age; and it does not appear that the church at Ptolemais suffered any wrong as its result, seeing that Synesius, recovering from the shock militant of his ordination, in the course of which his ecclesiastical friends had "laid hands upon him" in the roughest sense of the word, performed his new duties willingly; was no sporting bishop otherwise than as a "fisher of men" — sent his bow to the dogs, and his dogs to Jericho, that nearest Coventry to Ptolemais, silencing his "staunch hound's authentic voice" as soon as ever any importance became attached to the authenticity of his own. And if, according to the bond, he retained his wife and his Platonisms, we may honour him by the inference, that he did so for conscience' sake still more than love's, since the love was inoperative in other matters. For spiritual fervour and exaltation, he has honour among men and angels; and however intent upon spiritualising away the most glorified material body from "the heaven of his invention," he held fast and earnestly, as anybody's clenched hand could a horn of the altar, the Homousion doctrine of the Christian heaven, and other chief doctrines emphasising the divine sacrifice. But this poet has a higher place among poets than this bishop among bishops; the highest, we must repeat our conviction, of all yet named or to be named by us as "Greek Christian poets." Little, indeed, of his

poetry has reached us, but this little is great in a nobler sense than of quantity ; and when of his odes, Anacreontic for the most part, we cannot say praisefully that "they smell of Anacreon," it is because their fragrance is holier and more abiding ; it is because the human soul burning in the censer effaces from our spiritual perceptions the attar of a thousand rose-trees whose roots are in Teos. These odes have, in fact, a wonderful rapture and ecstasy. And if we find in them the phraseology of Plato or Plotinus, for he leant lovingly to the later Platonists, — nay, if we find in them oblique references to the out-worn mythology of paganism, even so have we beheld the mixed multitude of unconnected motes wheeling, rising in a great sunshine, as the sunshine were a motive energy, — and even so the burning, adoring poet-spirit sweeps upward the motes of world-fancies (as if, being in the world, their tendency was Godward) upward in a strong stream of sunny light, while she rushes into the presence of "the Alone." We say the *spirit* significantly in speaking of this poet's aspiration. His is an ecstasy of abstract intellect, of pure spirit, cold though impetuous ; the heart does not beat in it, nor is the human voice heard ; the poet is true to the heresy of the ecclesiastic, and there is no resurrection of the body. We shall attempt a translation of the ninth ode, closer if less graceful and polished than Mr. Boyd's, helping our hand to courage by the persuasion that the genius of its poetry must look through the thickest blanket of our dark.

Well-beloved and glory-laden,
 Born of Solyma's pure maiden !
 I would hymn Thee, blessed Warden,
 Driving from Thy Father's garden

Blinking serpent's crafty lust,
 With his bruised head in the dust !
 Down Thou camest, low as earth,
 Bound to those of mortal birth ;
 Down Thou camest, low as hell,
 Where shepherd-Death did tend and keep
 A thousand nations like to sheep,
 While weak with age old Hades fell
 Shivering through his dark to view Thee,
 And the Dog did backward yell
 With jaws all gory to let through Thee !
 So, redeeming from their pain
 Choirs of disembodied ones,
 Thou didst lead whom Thou didst gather,
 Upward in ascent again,
 With a great hymn to the Father,
 Upward to the pure white thrones !
 King, the dæmon tribes of air
 Shuddered back to feel Thee there !
 And the holy stars stood breathless,
 Trembling in their chorus deathless ;
 A low laughter fillèd æther —
 Harmony's most subtle sire
 From the seven strings of his lyre
 Stroked a measured music hither —
 Io pæan ! victory !
 Smiled the star of morning — he
 Who smileth to foreshow the day !
 Smilèd Hesperus the golden,
 Who smileth soft for Venus gay !
 While that hornèd glory holden
 Brimful from the fount of fire,
 The white moon, was leading higher
 In a gentle pastoral wise
 All the nightly deities !
 Yea, and Titan threw abroad
 The far shining of his hair
 'Neath 'Thy footsteps holy-fair,

Owning thee the Son of God ;
The Mind artificer of all,
And his own fire's original !

And THOU upon Thy wing of will
Mounting, — Thy God-foot uptill
The neck of the blue firmament, —
Soaring, didst alight content
Where the spirit-spheres were singing,
And the fount of good was springing,
In the silent heaven !
Where time is not with his tide
Ever running, never weary,
Drawing earth-born things aside
Against the rocks : nor yet are given
The plagues death-bold that ride the dreary
Tost matter-depths. Eternity
Assumes the places which they yield !
Not aged, howsoe'er she held
Her crown from everlastingly —
At once of youth, at once of eld,
While in that mansion which is hers
To God and gods she ministers !

How the poet rises in his "singing clothes" embroidered all over with the mythos and the philosophy ! Yet his eye is to the Throne : and we must not call him half a heathen by reason of a Platonic idiosyncrasy, seeing that the esoteric of the most suspicious turnings of his phraseology is "Glory to the true God." For another ode, Paris should be here to choose it — we are puzzled among the beautiful. Here is one with a thought in it from Gregory's prose, which belongs to Synesius by right of conquest : —

O my deathless, O my blessed,
Maid-born, glorious son confessed,

O my Christ of Solyma !
 I who earliest learnt to play
 This measure for Thee, fain would bring
 Its new sweet tune to citeru-string —
 Be propitious, O my King !
 Take this music which is mine
 Anthem'd from the songs divine !

We will sing thee, deathless One,
 God himself and God's great Son —
 Of sire of endless generations,
 Son of manifold creations !
 Nature mutually endued,
 Wisdom in infinitude !
 God, before the angels burning —
 Corpse, among the mortals mourning !
 What time Thou wast pour'd mild
 From an earthy vase defiled,
 Magi with fair arts besprent,
 At Thy new star's orient,
 Trembled inly, wondered wild,
 Questioned with their thoughts abroad —
 "What then is the new-born child ?
 Who the hidden God ?
 God, or corpse, or king ?
 Bring your gifts, oh hither bring
 Myrrh for rite — for tribute, gold —
 Frankincense for sacrifice !
 God ! Thine incense take and hold !
 King ! I bring thee gold of price !
 Myrrh with tomb will harmonise !

For Thou, entombed, hast purified
 Earthly ground and rolling tide,
 And the path of dæmon nations,
 And the free air's fluctuations,
 And the depth below the deep !
 Thou God, helper of the dead,

Low as Hades didst Thou tread !
 Thou King, gracious aspect keep,
 Take this music which is mine,
 Anthem'd from the songs divine.

EUDOCIA — in the twenty-first year of the fifth century — wife of Theodosius, and empress of the world, thought good to extend her sceptre —

(Hac claritate gemina
 O gloriosa fœmina !) —

over Homer's poems, and cento-ise them into an epic on the Saviour's life. She was the third fair woman accused of sacrificing the world for an apple, having moved her husband to wrath, by giving away his imperial gift of a large one to her own philosophic friend Paulinus ; and being unhappily more learned than her two predecessors in the sin, in the course of her exile to Jerusalem she took ghostly comfort by separating Homer's *εἰδωλον* from his *φρένες*. There she sat among the ruins of the holy city, addressing herself most unholily, with whatever good intentions and delicate fingers, to pulling Homer's gold to pieces bit by bit, even as the ladies of France devoted what remained to them of virtuous energy "pour parfiler" under the benignant gaze of Louis Quinze. She, too, who had no right of the purple to literary ineptitude — she, born no empress of Rome, but daughter of Leontius the Athenian, what had she to do with Homer, "parfilant" ? Was it not enough for Homer that he was turned once, like her own cast imperial mantle, by Apolinarius into a Jewish epic, but that he must be unpicked again by Eudocia for a Christian epic ? The reader, who has heard enough of centos, will not care

to hear how she did it. That she did it was too much ; and the deed recoiled. For mark the poetical justice of her destiny ; let all readers mark it, and all writers, especially female writers, who may be half as learned, and not half as fair, — that although she wrote many poems, one “On the Persian War,” whose title and merit are recorded, not one, except this cento, has survived. The obliterative sponge, we hear of in *Æschylus*, has washed out every verse except this cento’s “damned spot.” This remains. This is called *Eudocia* : this stands for the daughter of *Leontius*, and this only in the world. O fair mischief ! she is punished by her hand.

And yet, are we born critics any more than she was born an empress, that we should not have a heart ? and is our heart stone, that it should not wax soft within us while the vision is stirred “between our eyelids and our eyes,” of this beautiful *Athenais*, baptized once by Christian waters, and once by human tears, into *Eudocia*, the imperial mourner ? — this learned pupil of a learned father, crowned once by her golden hair, and once by her golden crown, yet praised more for poetry and learning than for beauty and greatness by such grave writers as *Socrates* and *Evagrius*, the ecclesiastical historians ? — this world’s empress, pale with the purple of her palaces, an exile even on the throne from her *Athens*, and soon twice an exile, from father’s grave and husband’s bosom ? We relent before such a vision. And what if, reluctantly, we declare her innocent of the Homeric cento ? — what if we find her “a whipping boy” to take the blame ? — what if we write down a certain *Proba* “improba,” and bid her bear it ? For *Eudocia*, having been once a mark to slander, may have been so

again ; and Falconia Proba, having committed centoism upon Virgil, must have been capable of anything. The Homeric cento has been actually attributed to her by certain critics, with whom we would join in all earnestness our most sour voices, gladly, for Eudocia's sake, who is closely dear to us, and not malignly for Proba's, who was "improba" without our help. So shall we impute evil to only one woman, and she not an Athenian ; while our worst wish, even to her, assumes this innoxious shape, that she had used a distaff rather than a stylus, though herself and the yet more "Sleeping Beauty" had owned one horoscope between them ! Amen to our wish ! A busy distaff and a sound sleep to Proba !

And now, that golden-haired, golden-crowned daughter of Leontius, for whom neither the much learning nor the much sorrow drove Hesperus from her sovran eyes — let her pass on unblenched. Be it said of her, softly as she goes, by all gentle readers — "She is innocent, whether for centos or for apples ! She wrote only such Christian Greek poems as Christians and poets might rejoice to read, but which perished with her beauty, as being of one seed with it."

Midway in the sixth century we encounter PAUL SILENTIARIUS, called so in virtue of the office held by him in the court of Justinian, and chiefly esteemed for his descriptive poem on the Byzantine church of St. Sophia, which, after the Arian conflagration, was rebuilt gorgeously by the emperor. This church was not dedicated to a female saint, according to the supposition of many persons, but to the second person of the Trinity, the *ἀγία σοφία* — holy wisdom ; while the poem being recited in the imperial presence, and the poet's gaze often forgetting to rise higher than

the imperial smile, Paul Silentiarius dwelt less on the divine dedication and the spiritual uses of the place, than on the glory of the dedicator and the beauty of the structure. We hesitate, moreover, to grant to his poem the praise which has been freely granted to it by more capable critics, of its power to realise this beauty of structure to the eyes of the reader. It is highly elaborate and artistic; but the elaboration and art appear to us architectural far more than picturesque. There is no sequency, no congruity, no keeping, no light and shade. The description has reference to the working as well as to the work, to the materials as well as to the working. The eyes of the reader are suffered to approach the whole only in analysis, or rather in analysis analysed. Every part, part by part, is recounted to him excellently well — is brought close till he may touch it with his eyelashes; but when he seeks for the general effect, it is in pieces — there is none of it. Byron shows him more in the passing words —

I have beheld Sophia's bright roofs swell
Their glittering mass i' the sun —

than Silentiarius in all his poem. Yet the poem has abundant merit in diction and harmony; and, besides higher noblenesses, the pauses are modulated with an artfulness not commonly attained by these later Greeks, and the ear exults in an unaccustomed rhythmic pomp which the inward critical sense is inclined to murmur at, as an expletive verbosity.

Whoever looketh with a mortal eye
To heaven's emblazoned forms, not steadfastly
With unreverted neck can bear to measure

That meadow-round of star-apparelled pleasure,
 But drops his eyelids to the verdant hill,
 Yearning to see the river run at will,
 With flowers on each side, — and the ripening corn,
 And grove thick set with trees, and flocks at morn
 Leaping against the dews, — and olives twined,
 And green vine-branches, trailingy inclined, —
 And the blue calmness skimmed by dripping oar
 Along the Golden Horn.

But if he bring
 His foot across this threshold, never more
 Would he withdraw it ; fain, with wandering
 Moist eyes, and ever-turning head, to stay,
 Since all satiety is driven away
 Beyond the noble structure. Such a fane
 Of blameless beauty hath our Cæsar raised
 By God's perfective grace, and not in vain !
 O emperor, these labours we have praised,
 Draw down the glorious Christ's perpetual smile ;
 For thou, the high-peaked Ossa didst not pile
 Upon Olympus' head, nor Pelion throw
 Upon the neck of Ossa, opening so
 The æther to the steps of mortals ! no !
 Having achieved a work more high than hope,
 Thou didst not need these mountains as a slope
 Whereby to scale the heaven ! Wings take thee thither
 From purest piety to highest æther.

The following passage, from the same "Description," is hard to turn into English, through the accumulative riches of the epithets. Greek words atone for their vain-glorious redundancy by their beauty, but we cannot think so of these our own pebbles : —

Who will unclothe me Homer's sounding lips,
 And sing the marble mead that oversweeps
 The mighty walls and pavements spread around

Of this tall temple, which the sun has crowned ?
 The hammer with its iron tooth was loosed
 Into Carystus' summit green, and bruised
 The Phrygian shoulder of the dædal stone ; —
 This marble, coloured after roses fused
 In a white air, and that, with flowers thereon
 Both purple and silver, shining tenderly !
 And that which in the broad fair Nile sank low
 The barges to their edge, the porphyry's glow
 Sown thick with little stars ! and thou mayst see
 The green stone of Laconia glitter free !
 And all the Carian hill's deep bosom brings,
 Streaked bow-wise, with a livid white and red, —
 And all the Lydian chasm keeps covered,
 A hueless blossom with a ruddier one
 Soft mingled ! all, besides, the Libyan sun
 Warms with his golden splendour, till he make
 A golden yellow glory for his sake,
 Along the roots of the Maurusian height ;
 And all the Celtic mountains give to sight
 From crystal clefts : black marbles dappled fair
 With milky distillations here and there !
 And all the onyx yields in metal-shine
 Of precious greenness ! — all that land of thine,
 Ætolia, hath on even plains engendered
 But not on mountain-tops, — a marble rendered
 Here nigh to green, of tints which emeralds use,
 Here with a sombre purple in the hues !
 Some marbles are like new-dropt snow, and some
 Alight with blackness ! Beauty's rays have come,
 So congregate, beneath this holy dome !

And thus the poet takes us away from the church
 and dashes our senses and admirations down these
 marble quarries ! Yet it is right for us to admit the
 miracle of a poem made out of stones ! and when he
 spoke of unclosing Homer's lips on such a subject, he

was probably thinking of Homer's ships, and meant to intimate that one catalogue was as good for him as another.

JOHN GEOMETRA arose in no propitious orient probably with the seventh century, although the time of his "elevation" appears to be uncertain within a hundred years.

He riseth slowly, as his sullen car
Had all the weights of sleep and death hung on it.

Plato, refusing his divine fellowship to any one who was not a geometrician or who was a poet, might have kissed our Johannes, who was not divine, upon both cheeks, in virtue of his other name and in vice of his verses. He was the author of certain hymns to the Virgin Mary, as accumulative of epithets and admirations as ten of her litanies, inclusive of a pious compliment, which, however geometrically exact in its proportions, sounds strangely.

O health to thee ! new living car of the sky,
Afire on the wheels of four virtues at once !
O health to thee ! Seat, than the cherubs more high,
More pure than the seraphs, *more broad than the thrones !*

Towards the close of the last hymn, the exhausted poet empties back something of the ascription into his own lap, by a remarkable "mihi quoque."

O health to me, royal one ! if there belong
Any grace to my singing, that grace is from thee.
O health to me, royal one ! if in my song
Thou hast pleasure, oh, thine is the grace of the glee !

We may mark the time of GEORGE PISIDA, about thirty years deep in the seventh century. He has

been confounded with the rhetorical archbishop of Nicomedia, but held the office of scævophylax, only lower than the highest, in the metropolitan church of St. Sophia, and was a poet, singing half in the church and half in the court, and considerably nearer to the feet of the Emperor Heraclius than can please us in any measure. Hoping all things, however, in our poetical charity, we are willing to hope even this, — that the man whom Heraclius carried about with him as a singing-man when he went to fight the Persians, and who sang and recited accordingly, and provided notes of admiration for all the imperial notes of interrogation, and gave his admiring poems the appropriate and suggestive name of *acroases* — auscultations, things intended to be heard, — might nevertheless love Heraclius the fighting-man, not slave-wise or flatterer-wise, but man-wise or dog-wise, in good truth, and up to the brim of his praise ; and so hoping, we do not dash the praise down as a libation to the infernal task-masters. Still it is an impotent conclusion to a free-hearted poet's musing on the "Six Days' Work," to wish God's creation under the sceptre of his particular friend ! It looks as if the particular friend had an ear like Dionysius, and the poet — ah, the poet ! — a mark as of a chain upon his brow in the shadow of his court laurel.

We shall not revive the question agitated among his contemporaries, whether Euripides or George Pisida wrote the best iambs ; but that our George knew the secret of beauty, and that, having noble thoughts, he could utter them nobly, is clear, despite of Heraclius. That he is, besides, unequal ; often coldly perplexed when he means to be ingenious, only violent when he seeks to be inspired ; that he premeditates ecstasies, and is inclined to the attitudes of the orators ; in brief,

that he "not only" (and not seldom) "sleeps but *smores*" — are facts as true of him as the praise is. His *Hexaëmeron*, to which we referred as his chief work, is rather a meditation or rhythmical speech upon the finished creation, than a retrospection of the six days ; and also there is more of Plato in it than of Moses. It has many fine things, and whole passages of no ordinary eloquence, though difficult to separate and select.

Whatever eyes seek God to view His Light,
As far as they behold Him close in night !
Whoever searcheth with insatiate balls
Th' abysmal glare, or gazeth on Heaven's walls
Against the fire-disk of the sun, the same
According to the vision he may claim,
Is dazzled from his sense. What soul of flame
Is called sufficient to view onward thus
The way whereby the sun's light came to us ?

O distant Presence in fixed motion ! Known
To all men, and inscrutable to one :
Perceived — uncomprehended ! unexplained
To all the spirits, yet by each attained,
Because its God-sight is Thy work ! O Presence,
Whatever holy greatness of Thine essence
Lie virtue-hidden, Thou hast given our eyes
The vision of Thy plastic energies —
Not shown in angels only (those create
All fiery-hearted, in a mystic state
Of bodiless body) but, if order be
Of natures more sublime than they or we,
In highest Heaven, or mediate æther, or
This world now seen, or one that came before
Or one to come, — quick in Thy purpose, — *there* !
Working in fire and water, earth and air —
In every tuneful star, and tree, and bird —

In all the swimming, creeping life unheard,
In all green herbs, and chief of all, in MAN.

There are other poems of inferior length, "On the Persian War," in three books, or, alas, "auscultations," — "The Heracliad," again on the Persian war, and in two (of course) auscultations again, — "Against Severus," "On the Vanity of Life," "The War of the Huns," and others. From the "Vanity of Life," which has much beauty and force, we shall take a last specimen : —

Some yearn to rule the state, to sit above,
And touch the cares of hate as near as love ;
Some their own reason for tribunal take,
And for all thrones the humblest prayers they make ;
Some love the orator's vain-glorious art, —
The wise love silence and the hush of heart, —
Some to ambition's spirit-curse are fain,
That golden apple with a bloody stain ;
While some do battle in her face (more rife
Of noble ends) and conquer strife with strife :
And while your groaning tables gladden these,
Satiety's quick chariot to disease,
Hunger the wise man helps, to water, bread,
And light wings to the dreams about his head.

The truth becomes presently obvious, that —

The sage o'er all the world his sceptre waves,
And earth is common ground to thrones and graves.

JOHN DAMASCENUS, to whom we should not give by any private impulse of admiration the title of Chrysorrhoeas, accorded to him by his times, lived at Damascus, his native city, early in the eighth century,

holding an unsheathed sword of controversy until the point drew down the lightning. He retired before the affront rather than the injury ; and in company with his beloved friend and fellow poet, Cosmas of Jerusalem (whose poetical remains the writer of these Remarks has vainly sought the sight of, and therefore can only, as by hearsay, ascribe some value to them), hid the remnant of his life in the monastery of Saba, where Phocas of the twelfth century looked upon the tomb of either poet. John Damascenus wrote several acrostics on the chief festivals of the churches, which are not much better, although very much longer, than acrostics need be. When he writes out of his heart, without looking to the first letters of his verses, — as, indeed, in his Anacreontic his eyes are too dim for iota hunting, — he is another man, and almost a strong man ; for the heart being sufficient to speak, we want no Delphic oracle — “Pan is not dead.” In our selection from the Anacreontic hymn, the tears seem to trickle audibly ; we welcome them as a castalia, or, rather, “as Siloa’s brook,” flowing by an oracle more divine than any Grecian one : —

From my lips in their defilement,
 From my heart in its beguilement,
 From my tongue which speaks not fair,
 From my soul stained everywhere,
 O my Jesus, take my prayer !
 Spurn me not for all it says,
 Not for words and not for ways,
 Not for shamelessness endued !
 Make me brave to speak my mood,
 O my Jesus, as I would !
 Or teach me, which I rather seek,
 What to do and what to speak.

I have sinnèd more than she,
 Who learning where to meet with Thee,
 And bringing myrrh, the highest-priced,
 Anointed bravely, from her knee,
 Thy blessed feet accordingly,
 My God, my Lord, my Christ !
 As Thou saidest not "Depart"
 To that suppliant from her heart,
 Scorn me not, O Word, that art
 The gentlest one of all words said !
 But give Thy feet to me instead
 That tenderly I may them kiss
 And clasp them close, and never miss
 With over-dropping tears, as free
 And precious as that myrrh could be,
 T' anoint them bravely from my knee !
 Wash me with Thy tears : draw nigh me,
 That their salt may purify me.
 THOU remit my sins who knowest
 All the sinning to the lowest —
 Knowest all my wounds, and seest
 All the stripes Thyself decreest ;
 Yea, but knowest all my faith,
 Seest all my force to death,
 Hearest all my wailings low,
 That mine evil should be so !
 Nothing hidden but appears
 In Thy knowledge, O Divine,
 O Creator, Saviour mine —
 Not a drop of falling tears,
 Not a breath of inward moan,
 Not a heart-beat — which is gone !

After this deep pathos of Christianity, we dare not
 say a word ; we dare not even praise it as poetry :
 our heart is stirred, and not "idly." The only
 sound which can fitly succeed the cry of the contrite

soul is that of Divine condonation or of angelic rejoicing. Let us, who are sorrowful still, be silent too.

Although doubts, as broad as four hundred years, separate the earliest and latest period talked of as the age of SIMEON METAPHRASTES by those "viri illustrissimi" the classical critics, we may set him down, without much peril to himself or us, at the close of the tenth century, or very early in the eleventh. He is chiefly known for his "Lives of the Saints," which have been lifted up as a mark both for honour and dishonour; which Psellus hints at as a favourite literature of the angels, which Leo Allatius exalts as chafing the temper of the heretics, and respecting which we, in an exemplary serenity, shall straightway accede to one-half of the opinion of Bellarmine—that the work speaketh not as things actually happened, but as they might have happened — "*non ut res gestæ fuerant, sed ut geri potuerant.*" Our half of this weighty opinion is the first clause — we demur upon "*ut geri potuerant,*" — and we need not go further than the former to win a light of commentary for the term "metaphrases," applied to the saintly biographies in otherwise a doubtful sense, and worn obliquely upon the sleeve of the biographer Metaphrastes, in no doubtful token of his skill in metamorphosing things as they were into things as they might have been. And Simeon having received from Constantinople the honour of his birth within her walls, and returning to her the better honour of the distinction, and usefulness of his life, — so writeth Psellus, his encomiast, with a graceful turn of thought, — expired in an "odour of sanctity" befitting the biographer of all the saints,—breathing out from his breathless remains such an incense of celestial sweetness, that if it had not been for

the maladroitness of certain unfragrant persons whose desecration of the next tomb acted incontinently as a stopper, the whole earth might at this day be *metaphrased* to our nostrils, as steeped in an attar-gul of Eden or Ede ! — we might be dwelling in a phœnix-nest at this day. Through the maladroitness, however, in question, there is lost to us every sweeter influence from the life and death of Simeon Metaphrastes than may result from the lives and deaths of his saints, and from other works of his, whether commentaries, orations, or poems ; and we cannot add that the aroma from his writings bears any proportion in value to the fragrance from his sepulchre. Little of his poetry has reached us, and we are satisfied with the limit. There were three Simeons, who did precede our Simeon, as the world knoweth, and whose titles were *Stylitæ* or *Columnarii*, because it pleased them in their saintly volition to take the highest place and live out their natural lives supernaturally, each upon the top of a column. Peradventure the columns which our Simeon refused to live upon conspired against his poetry : peradventure it is on their account that we find ourselves between two alphabetic acrostics, written solemnly by his hand, and take up one wherein every alternate line begins with a letter of the alphabet ; its companion in the couplet being left to run behind it, out of livery and sometimes out of breath. Will the public care to look upon such a curiosity ? Will our verse-writers care to understand what harm may be done by a conspiracy of columns — gods and men quite on one side ? And will candid readers care to confess at last that there is an earnestness in the poem, acrostic as it is — a leaning to beauty's side — which is above the acrosticism ? Let us try : —

Ah, tears upon mine eyelids, sorrow on mine heart,
 I bring Thee soul-repentance, Creator as Thou art!
 Bounding joyous actions, deep as arrows go;
 Pleasures self-revolving, issue into woe!
 Creatures of our mortal, headlong rush to sin:
 I have seen them; of them — ah me, — I have been!
 Duly pitying Spirits, from your spirit-frame,
 Bring your cloud of weeping, — worthy of the same!
 Else I would be bolder; if that light of Thine,
 Jesus, quell the evil, let it on me shine!
 Fail me truth, is living, less than death forlorn,
 When the sinner readeth — “better be unborn”?
 God, I raise toward Thee both eyes of my heart,
 With a sharp cry — “Help me!” — while mine
 hopes depart.
 Help me! Death is bitter, all hearts comprehend;
 But I fear beyond it — end beyond the end.
 Inwardly behold me, how my soul is black:
 Sympathise in gazing, do not spurn me back!
 Knowing that Thy pleasure is not to destroy,
 That Thou fain wouldst save me — this is all my
 joy.
 Lo, the lion, hunting spirits in their deep,
 (Stand beside me!) roareth — (help me!) nears to
 leap.
 Mayst Thou help me, Master! Thou art pure alone,
 Thou alone art sinless, one Christ on a throne.
 Nightly deeds I loved them, hated day’s instead;
 Hence this soul-involving darkness on mine head.
 O Word, who constrainest things estranged and curst,
 If Thy hand can save me, that work were the first!
 Pensive o’er my sinning, counting all its ways,
 Terrors shake me, waiting adequate dismays.
 Quenchless glories many, hast Thou — many a rod —
 Thou, too, hast Thy measures. Can I bear Thee,
 God?
 Rend away my counting from my soul’s decline,
 Show me of the portion of those saved of Thine!

Slow drops of my weeping to Thy mercy run :
 Let its rivers wash me, by that mercy won !
 Tell me what is worthy, in our dreary now,
 As the future glory ? (madness !) what, as THOU ?
 Union, oh, vouchsafe me to Thy fold beneath,
 Lest the wolf across me gnash his gory teeth !
 View me, judge me gently ! spare me, Master bland,
 Brightly lift Thine eyelids, kindly stretch Thine
 hand !
 Winged and choral angels ! 'twixt my spirit lone,
 And all deathly visions, interpose your own !
 Yea, my Soul, remember death and woe inwrought —
 After-death affliction, wringing earth's to nought !
 Zone me, Lord, with graces ! Be foundations built
 Underneath me ; save me ! as Thou know'st and
 wilt !

The omission of our X (in any case too sullen a
 letter to be employed in the service of an acrostic) has
 permitted us to write line for line with the Greek ; and
 we are able to infer, to the honour of the Greek poet,
 that, although he did not live upon a column, he was
 not far below one, in the virtue of self-mortification.
 We are tempted to accord him some more gracious and
 serious justice, by breaking away a passage from his
 " *Planctus Mariæ*," the lament of Mary on embracing
 the Lord's body ; and giving a moment's insight into
 a remarkable composition, which, however deprived of
 its poetical right of measure, is, in fact, nearer to a
 poem, both in purpose and achievement, than any
 versified matter we have looked upon from this meta-
 phrastic hand : —

" O, uncovered corse, yet Word of the Living
 One ! self-doomed to be uplifted on the cross for the
 drawing of all men unto Thee, — what member of
 Thine hath no wound ? O my blessed brows, em-

braced by the thorn-wreath which is pricking at my heart ! O beautiful and priestly One, who hadst not where to lay Thine head and rest, and now wilt lay it only in the tomb, resting *there* ; sleeping, as Jacob said, a lion's sleep ! O cheeks turned to the smiter ! O lips, new hive for bees, yet fresh from the sharpness of vinegar and bitterness of gall ? O mouth, wherein was no guile, yet betrayed by the traitor's kiss ! O hand, creative of man, yet nailed to the cross, and since, stretched out unto Hades, with help for the first transgressor ! O feet, once walking on the deep to hallow the waters of nature ! O me, my son ! . . . Where is thy chorus of sick ones ? — those whom Thou didst cure of their diseases, and bring back from the dead ? Is none here, but only Nicodemus, to draw the nails from those hands and feet ? — none here, but only Nicodemus, to lift Thee from the cross, heavily, heavily, and lay Thee in these mother-arms, which bore Thee long ago, in thy babyhood, and were glad *then* ? These hands, which swaddled Thee then, let them bind Thy grave-clothes now. And yet, — O bitter funerals ! — O Giver of life from the dead, liest Thou dead before mine eyes ? Must *I*, who said 'hush' beside Thy cradle, wail this passion upon Thy grave ? *I*, who washed Thee in Thy first bath, must I drop on Thee these hotter tears ? *I*, who raised Thee high in my maternal arms, — but *then* Thou leapedst, — *then* Thou sprangest up in Thy child-play ! ”

It is better to write so than to stand upon a column. And, although the passage does, both generally and specifically, in certain of its ideas, recall the antithetic eloquence of that Gregory Nazianzen before whom this Simeon must be dumb, we have touched his “ ora-

tion," so called, nearer than our subject could permit us to do any of Gregory's, because the "Planctus" involves an imagined situation, is poetical in its design. Moreover, we must prepare to look downwards; the poets were descending from the gorgeous majesty of the hexameter and the severe simplicity of iambics down through the mediate *versus politici*, a loose metre, adapted to the popular ear, to the lowest deep of a "measured prose," — which has been likened, but which *we* will not liken, to the blank verse of our times. Presently, we may offer an example from Psellus of a prose acrostic — the reader being delighted with the prospect! "A whole silver threepence, mistress!"

MICHAEL PSELLUS lived midway in the eleventh century, and appears to have been a man of much aspiration toward the higher places of the earth. A senator of no ordinary influence, preceptor of the Emperor Michael previous to that accession, he is supposed to have included in his instructions the advantages of sovereignty, and in his precepts the most subtle means of securing them. We were about to add, that his acquirements as a scholar were scarcely less imperial than those of his pupil as a prince; but the expression might have been inappropriate. There are cases not infrequent, not entirely opposite to the present case, and worthy always of all meditation by such intelligent men as affect extensive acquisition, — when acquirements are not ruled by the man, but rule him. Whatever originates from the mind cannot obstruct her individual faculty; nay, whatever she receives inwardly and marks her power over by creating out of it a *tertium quid*, according to the law of the perpetual generation of spiritual verities, is not obstruc-

tive but impulsive to the evolution of faculty ; but the erudition, whether it be erudition as the world showed it formerly, or miscellaneous literature, as the world shows it now, the accumulated acquirement of whatever character, which remains *extraneous* to the mind, is and must be in the same degree an obstruction and deformity. How many are there from Psellus to Bayle, bound hand and foot intellectually with the rolls of their own papyrus — men whose erudition has grown stronger than their souls ! How many whom we would gladly see washed in the clean waters of a little ignorance, and take our own part in their refreshment ! Not that knowledge is bad, but that wisdom is better ; and that it is better and wiser in the sight of the angels of knowledge to think out one true thought with a thrush's song and a green light for all lexicon (or to think it without the light and without the song — because truth is beautiful, where they are not seen or heard) — than to mummy our benumbed souls with the circumvolutions of twenty thousand books. And so Michael Psellus was a learned man.

We have sought earnestly, yet in vain, — and the fact may account for our ill-humour, — a sight of certain iambics upon vices and virtues, and Tantalus and Sphinx, which are attributed to this writer, and cannot be in the moon after all : — earnestly, yet with no fairer encouragement to our desire than what befalls it from his *poems* “on the Councils,” the first of which, and only the first, through the softness of our charities, we bring to confront the reader : —

Know the holy councils, King, to their utmost number,
Such as roused the impious ones from their world-wide
slumber !

224 THE GREEK CHRISTIAN POETS.

Seven in all those councils were : Nice the first contain-
 ing,
 When the godly master-soul Constantine was reigning,
 What time at Byzantium, hallowed with the hyssop,
 In heart and word, Metrophanes presided as archbishop !
 It cut away Arius' tongue's maniacal delusion,
 Which cut off from the Trinity the blessed Homouou-
 sion —
 Blasphemed (O miserable man) the maker of the creat-
 ure,
 And low beneath the Father cast the equal Filial nature.

The prose acrostic, contained in an office written by Psellus to the honour of Simeon, is elaborated on the words "I sing thee who didst write the metaphrases ;" every sentence being insulated, and beginning with a charmed letter.

Say in a dance how we shall go,
 Who never could a measure know ?

why, thus — (and yet Psellus, who did *know* every-
 thing, wrote a synopsis of the metres !) — why,
 thus : —

"Inspire me, Word of God, with a rhythmic
 chant, for I am borne onward to praise Simeon Meta-
 phrastes and Logothetes, as he is fitly called, the man
 worthy of admiration !

"Solemnly from the heavenly heights did the
 Blessed Ghost descend on thee, wise one, and finding
 thine heart pure, rested there, there verily in the
 body !"

Surely we need not write any more. But Michael
 Psellus was a very learned man.

JOHN of EUCHAITA (or Euchania, or Theodoropolis,
 — the three names do appear through the twilight to

belong to one city) was a bishop, probably contemporary with Psellus — is only a poet now : we turn to see the voice which speaks to us. It is a voice with a soul in it, clear and sweet and living : and we who have walked long in the desert, leap up to its sound as to the dim flowing of a stream, and would take a deep breath by its side both for the weariness which is gone and the repose which is coming. But it is a rarer thing than a stream in the desert : it is a voice in the desert — the only voice of a city. The city may have three names, as we have said, or the three names may more fitly appertain to three cities — scholars knit their brows and wax doubtful as they talk ; but a city denuded of its multitudes it surely is, ruined even of its ruins it surely is : no exhalation arises from its tombs, the foxes have lost their way to it, the bittern's cry is as dumb as the vanished population — only the Voice remains. John Mauropus, of Euchaita, Euchania, Theodoropolis — one living man among many dead as the Arabian tale goes of the city of enchantment — one speechful voice among the silent, sole survivor of the breath which maketh words, effluence of the soul replacing the bittern's cry — speak to us ! And thou shalt be to us as a poet ; we will salute thee by that high name. For have we not stood face to face with Michael Psellus and him of the metaphrases ? Surely as a poet may we salute *thee !*

His poetry has, as if in contrast to the scenery of circumstances in which we find it, or to the fatality of circumstances in which it has *not* been found (and even Mr. Clarke in his learned work upon Sacred Literature, which is, however, incommunicative generally upon sacred poetry, appears unconscious of his

being and his bishopric) — his poetry has a character singularly vital, fresh, and serene. There is nothing in it of the rapture of inspiration, little of the operativeness of art — nothing of imagination in a high sense, or of ear-service in any : he is not, he says, of those —

Who rain hard with redundancies of words,
And thunder and lighten out of eloquence.

His Greek being opposed to that of the Silentiarii and the Pisidæ by a peculiar simplicity and ease of collocation which the reader feels lightly in a moment, the thoughts move through its transparency with a certain calm nobleness and sweet living earnestness, with holy upturned eyes and human tears beneath the lids, till the reader feels lovingly too. We startle him from his reverie with an octave note on a favourite literary fashion of the living London, drawn from the voice of the lost city ; discovering by that sound the first serial illustrator of pictures by poems, in the person of our Johannes. Here is a specimen from an annual of Euchaïta, or Euchania, or Theodoropolis — we may say “annual” although the pictures were certainly not in a book, but were probably ornaments of the beautiful temple in the midst of the city, concerning which there is a tradition. Here is a specimen selected for love’s sake, because it “illustrates” a portrait of Gregory Nazianzen : —

What meditates thy thoughtful gaze, my father ?
To tell me some new truth ? Thou canst not so !
For all that mortal hands are weak to gather
Thy blessed books unfolded long ago.

These are striking verses, upon the Blessed among women, weeping : —

O Lady of the passion, dost thou weep ?
 What help can we then through our tears survey,
 If such as thou a cause for wailing keep ?
 What help, what hope, for us, sweet Lady, say ?
 “ Good man, it doth befit thine heart to lay
 More courage next it, having seen me so.
 All other hearts find other balm to-day —
The whole world's consolation is my woe ! ”

Would any hear what can be said of a Transfiguration before Raffael's : —

Tremble, spectator, at the vision won thee !
 Stand afar off, look downward from the height,
 Lest Christ too nearly seen should lighten on thee,
 And from thy fleshly eyeballs strike the sight,
 As Paul fell ruined by that glory white !
 Lo, the disciples prostrate, each apart,
 Each impotent to bear the lamping light !
 And all that Moses and Elias might,
 The darkness caught the grace upon her heart
 And gave them strength for ! *Thou*, if evermore
 A God-voice pierce thy dark, — rejoice, adore !

Our poet was as unwilling a bishop as the most sturdy of the “ nolentes ” ; and there are poems written both in depreciation of, and in retrospective regret for, the ordaining dignity, marked by noble and holy beauties which we are unwilling to pass without extraction. Still we are constrained for space, and must come at last to his chief individual characteristic — to the gentle humanities which, strange to say, preponderate in the solitary voice — to the familiar smiles and sighs which go up and down in it to our ear. We

will take the poem "To his old house," and see how the house survives by his good help, when the sun shines no more on the golden statue of Constantine : —

O be not angry with me, gentle house,
That I have left thee empty and deserted !
Since thou thyself that evil didst arouse,
In being to thy masters so false-hearted,
In loving none of those who did possess thee,
In minist'ring to no one to an end,
In no one's service caring to confess thee,
But loving still the change of friend for friend,
And sending the last, plague-wise, to the door !
And so, or ere thou canst betray and leave me,
I, a wise lord, dismiss thee, servitor,
And antedate the wrong thou mayst achieve me
Against my will, by what my will allows ;
Yet not without some sorrow, gentle house !

For oh, beloved house, what time I render
My last look back on thee I grow more tender !
Pleasant possession, hearth for father's age,
Dear gift of buried hands, sole heritage !
My blood is stirred ; and love, that learnt its play
From all sweet customs, moves mine heart thy way
For thou wast all my nurse and helpful creature,
For thou wast all my tutor and my teacher ;
In thee through lengthening toils I struggled deep,
In thee I watched all night without its sleep,
In thee I worked the wearier daytime out,
Exalting truth, or trying by a doubt.

And oh, my father's roof, the memory leaves
Such pangs as break mine heart, beloved eaves !
But God's word conquers all.

He is forced to a strange land, reverting with this benediction to the "dearest house" : —

Farewell, farewell, mine own familiar one,
 Estranged for evermore from this day's sun,
 Fare-thee-well so ! Farewell, O second mother,
 O nurse and help, — remains there not another !
 My bringer-up to some sublimer measure
 Of holy childhood and perfected pleasure !
 Now other spirits must thou tend and teach,
 And minister thy quiet unto each,
 For reasoning uses, if they love such use,
 But nevermore to me. God keep thee, house,
 God keep thee, faithful corner, where I drew
 So calm a breath of life ! And God keep you,
 Kind neighbours ! Though I leave you by His grace,
 Let no grief bring a shadow to your face ;
 Because whate'er He willeth to be done
 His will makes easy, makes the distant — one,
 And soon brings all embraced before His throne !

We pass PHILIP SOLITARIUS, who lived at the close of this eleventh century, even as we have passed one or two besides of his fellow-poets ; because they, having hidden themselves beyond the reach of our eyes and the endeavour of our hands, and we being careful to speak by knowledge rather than by testimony, nothing remains to us but this same silent passing — this regretful one, as our care to do better must testify — albeit our fancy will not, by any means, account them, with all their advantages of absence, “the best part of the solemnity.”

Early in the twelfth century we are called to the recognition of THEODORE PRODROMUS, theologian, philosopher and poet. His poems are unequal, consisting principally of a series of tetrastichs (Greek epigrams for lack of point, French epigrams for lack of poetry) upon the Old and New Testaments, and the Life of Chrysostom, — all nearly as bare of the rags

of literary merit as might be expected from the design ; and three didactic poems upon Love, Providence, and against Bareus the heretic, into which the poet has cast the recollected life of his soul. The soul deports herself as a soul should, with a vivacity and energy which work outward and upward into eloquence. The sentiments are lofty, the expression free ; there is an instinct to a middle and an end. Music we miss, even to the elementary melody : the poet thinks his thoughts, and speaks them ; not indeed what all poets, so called, do esteem a necessary effort, and indeed what we should thank him for doing ; but he *sings* them in nowise, and they are not of that divine order which are crowned by right of their divinity with an inseparable aureole of sweet sound. His poem upon Love, — *φιλία* says the Greek word, but friendship does not answer to it, — is a dialogue between the personification and a stranger. It opens thus dramatically, the stranger speaking : —

Love ! Lady diademed with honour, whence
 And whither goest thou ? Thy look presents
 Tears to the lid, thy mien is vext and low,
 Thy locks fall wildly from thy drooping brow,
 Thy blushes are all pale, thy garb is fit
 For mourning in, and shoon and zone are loose !
 So changed thou art to sadness every whit,
 And all that pomp and purple thou didst use,
 That seemly sweet, that new rose on the mouth,
 Those fair-smoothed tresses, and that graceful zone,
 Bright sandals, and the rest thou haddest on,
 Are all departed, gone to nought together !
 And now thou walkest mournful in the train
 Of mourning women ! — where and whence, again ?
Love. From earth to God my Father.

Stranger. Dost thou say
That earth of Love is desolated ?
Love. Yea !
It so much scorned me.
Stranger. Scorned ?
Love. And cast me out
From its door.
Stranger. From its door ?
Love. As if without
I had my lot to die !

Love consents to give her confidence to the wondering stranger ; whereupon, as they sit in the shadow of a tall pine, she tells a Platonic story of all the good she had done in heaven before the stars, and the angels, and the throned Triad, and of all her subsequent sufferings on the melancholy and ungrateful earth. The poem, which includes much beauty, ends with a quaint sweetness in the troth-plighting of the stranger and the lady. Mayst thou have been faithful to that oath, O Theodore Prodromus ! but thou didst swear "too much to be believed — so *much*."

The poems "On Providence" and "Against Bareus" exceed the "Love," perhaps, in power and eloquence to the full measure of the degree in which they fall short of the interest of the latter's design. Whereupon we dedicate the following selection from the "Providence" to Mr. Carlyle's "gigmen" and all "respectable persons" : —

Ah me ! what tears mine eyes are welling forth,
To witness in this synagogue of earth
Wise men speak wisely while the scoffers sing,
And rich men folly, for much honouring !
Melitus trifles, — Socrates decrees
Our further knowledge ! Death to Socrates,

And long life to Melitus ! . . .

Chiefdom of evil, gold ! blind child of clay,
Gnawing with fixed tooth earth's heart away !
Go ! perish from us ! objugation vain
To soulless nature, powerless to contain
One ill unthrust upon it ! Rather perish
That turpitude of crowds, by which they cherish
Bad men for their good fortune, or condemn,
Because of evil fortune, virtuous men !

Oh, for a trumpet mouth ! an iron tongue
Sufficient for all speech ! foundations hung
High on Parnassus' top to bear my feet !
So from that watch-tower, words which shall be meet,
I may out-thunder to the nations near me —
“ Ye worshippers of gold, poor rich men, hear me !
Where do ye wander ? — for what object stand ?
That gold is earth's ye carry in your hand,
And floweth earthward ; bad men have its curse
The most profusely : would yourselves be worse
So to be richer ? — better in your purse ?
Your royal purple — 'twas a dog that found it !
Your pearl of price — a sickened oyster owned it !
Your glittering gems are pebbles, dust-astray ;
Your palace pomp was wrought of wood and clay,
Smoothed rock and moulded plinth ! earth's clay, earth's
wood,
Earth's common-hearted stones ! Is this your mood,
To honour *earth*, to worship *earth*, nor blush ? ”
What dost thou murmur, savage mouth ? Hush, hush,
Thy wrath is vainly breathed. The depth to tread
Of God's deep judgments, was not Paul's, he said.

The “ savage mouth ” speaks in power, with what-
ever harshness : and we are tempted to contrast with

this vehement utterance another short poem by the same poet, a little quaint withal, but light, soft, almost tuneful, — as written for a “Book of Beauty,” and that not of Euchaïta ! The subject is “LIFE.”

Oh, take me, thou mortal, — thy LIFE for thy praiser !
Thou hast met, found and seized me, and know'st what
my ways are.

Nor leave me for slackness, nor yield me for pleasure,
Nor look up too saintly, nor muse beyond measure !
There's the veil from my head — see the worst of my
mourning !

There are wheels to my feet — have a dread of their
turning !

There are wings round my waist — I may flatter and flee
thee !

There are yokes on my hands — fear the chains I decree
thee ;

Hold *me* ! hold a shadow, the winds as they quiver ;

Hold *me* ! hold a dream, smoke, a track on the river.

Oh, take me, thou mortal, — thy Life for thy praiser,
Thou hast met not and seized not, nor know'st what my
ways are !

Nay, frown not, and shrink not, nor call me an aspen ;
There's the veil from my head ! I have dropped from
thy clasping !

A fall-back within it I soon may afford thee ;

There are wheels to my feet — I may roll back toward
thee !

There are wings round my waist — I may flee back and
clip thee !

There are yokes on my hands — I may soon cease to
whip thee !

Take courage ! I rather would hearten than hip thee !

JOHN TZETZA divides the twelfth century with his
name, which is not a great one. In addition to an

iambic fragment upon education, he has written indefinitely in the metre *politicus*, what must be read, if read at all, with a corresponding energy, — thirteen “chiliads,” of “*variæ historiæ*,” so called after Ælian’s, — Ælian’s without the “honey-tongue,” — very various histories indeed, about crocodiles and flies, and Plato’s philosophy and Cleopatra’s nails, and Samson and Phidias, and the resurrection from the dead, and the Calydonian boar, — “everything under the sun” being, in fact, their imperfect epitome. The omission is simply POETRY! there is no apparent consciousness of her entity in the mind of this versifier; no aspiration towards her presence, not so much as a sigh upon her absence. We do not, indeed, become aware, in the whole course of this laborious work, of much unfolding of faculty — take it lower than the poetical; of nothing much beyond an occasional dry, sly, somewhat boorish humour, which being good humour besides, would not be a bad thing were its traces only more extended. But the general level of the work is a dull talkativeness, a prosy adversity, who is no “Daughter of Jove,” and a slumberousness without a dream. We adjudge to our reader the instructive history of the Phoenix.

A phoenix is a single bird and synchronous with nature;
 The peacock cannot equal him in beauty or in stature.
 In radiance he outshines the gold; the world in wonder
 yieldeth;
 His nest he fixeth in the trees, and all of spices buildeth.
 And when he dies, a little worm, from out his body
 twining,
 Doth generate him back again whene’er the sun is shining.
 He lives in Ægypt, and he dies in Æthiopia only, as
 Asserts Philostratus, who wrote the Life of Apollonius.

And (as the wise Ægyptian scribe, the holy scribe
 Chæremon,
 Hath entered on these Institutes, all centre their esteem
 on)
 Seven thousand years and six of age, this phoenix of the
 story
 Expireth from the fair Nile side, whereby he had his
 glory.

In the early part of the fourteenth century, MANUEL PHILE, pricked emulously to the heart by the successful labours of Tzetza, embraced into identity with himself the remaining half of Ælian, and developed in his poetical treatise "On the Properties of Animals," to which Isachimus Camerarius provided a conclusion — the "Natural History" of that industrious and amusing Greek-Roman. The Natural History is translated into verse, but by no means glorified; and yet the poet of animals, Phile, has carried away far more of the Ælian honey clinging to the edges of his *patera* than the poet of the Chiliads did ever wot of. What we find in him is not beauty, what we hear in him is not music, but there is an open feeling for the beautiful which stirs at a word, and we have a scarcely confessed contentment in hearkening to those twice-told stories of birds and beasts and fishes, measured out to us in the low monotony of his chanting voice. Our selections shall say nothing of the live grasshopper, called, with the first breath of this paper, an emblem of the vital Greek tongue; because the space left to us closes within our sight, and the science of the age does not thirst to receive, through our hands, the history of grasshoppers, according to Ælian or Phile either. Everybody knows what Phile tells us here, that grasshoppers live

upon morning dew, and cannot sing when it is dry. Everybody knows that the lady grasshopper sings not at all. And if the moral, drawn by Phile from this latter fact, of the advantage of silence in the female sex generally, be true and important, it is also too obvious to exact our enforcement of it. Therefore we pass by the grasshopper, and the nightingale too, for all her fantastic song; and hasten to introduce to European naturalists a Philhellenic species of *heron*, which has escaped the researches of Cuvier, and the peculiarities of which may account to the philosophic reader for that instinct of the "wisdom of our forefathers," which established an English university in approximation with the Fens. It is earnestly to be hoped that the nice ear in question for the Attic dialect may still be preserved among the herons of Cambridgeshire: —

A Grecian island nourisheth to bless
 A race of herons in all nobleness.
 If some barbarian bark approach the shore,
 They hate, they flee, — no eagle can outsoar!
 But if by chance an Attic voice be wist,
 They grow softhearted straight, philhellenist;
 Press on in earnest flocks along the strand,
 And stretch their wings out to the comer's hand.
 Perhaps he nears them with a gentle mind, —
 They love his love, though foreign to their kind!
 For so the island giveth wingèd teachers,
 In true love lessons, to all wingless creatures.

He has written, besides, "A Dialogue between Mind and Phile," and other poems; and we cannot part without taking from him a more solemn tone, which may sound as an "Amen" to the good we have said of him. The following address to the Holy Spirit is concentrated in expression: —

O living Spirit, O falling of God-dew,
 O Grace which dost console us and renew,
 O vital light, O breath of angelhood,
 O generous ministration of things good,
 Creator of the visible, and best
 Upholder of the great unmanifest
 Power infinitely wise, new boon sublime
 Of science and of art, constraining might,
 In whom I breathe, live, speak, rejoice, and write, —
 Be with us in all places, for all time !

“And now,” saith the patientest reader of all, “you have done. Now we have watched out the whole night of the world with you, by no better light than these poetical rush-lights, and the wicks fail, and the clock of the universal hour is near upon the stroke of the seventeenth century, and you have surely done !” Surely *not*, we answer ; for we see a hand which the reader sees not, which beckons us over to Crete, and clasps within its shadowy fingers a roll of hymns Anacreontical, written by MAXIMUS MARGUNIUS : and not for the last of our readers would we lose this last of the Greeks, owing him salutation. Yet the hymns have, for the true Anacreontic fragrance, a musty odour, and we have scant praise for them in our nostrils. Their inspiration is from Gregory Nazianzen, whose “Soul and Body” are renewed in them by a double species of transmigration ; and although we kiss the feet of Gregory’s high excellences, we cannot admit any one of them to be a safe conductor of poetical inspiration. And, in union with Margunius’s plagiaristic tendencies, there is a wearisome lengthiness, harder to bear. He will knit you to the whole length of a “Honi soit qui mal y pense,” till you fall asleep to the humming of the

stitches what time you should be reading the "moral." We ourselves once dropped into a "distraction," as the French say, — for nothing could be more different from what the English say, than our serene state of self-abnegation, — at the beginning of a house-building by this Maximus Margunius : when, reading on some hundred lines with our bare bodily eyes, and our soul starting up on a sudden to demand a measure of the progress, behold, he was building it still, with a trowel in the same hand : it was not forwarder by a brick. The swallows had time to hatch two nestfuls in a chimney while he finished the chimney-pot ! Nevertheless he has moments of earnestness, and they leave beauties in their trace. Let us listen to this extract from his fifth hymn : —

Take me as a hermit lone
 With a desert life and moan ;
 Only Thou anear to mete
 Slow or quick my pulse's beat ;
 Only thou, the night to chase
 With the sunlight in Thy face !
 Pleasure to the eyes may come
 From a glory seen afar,
 But if life concentre gloom
 Scattered by no little star,
 Then, how feeble, God, we are .
 Nay, whatever bird there be,
 (Æther by his flying stirred,)
 He, in this thing, must be free —
 And I, Saviour, am Thy bird,
 Pricking with an open beak
 At the words that Thou dost speak !
 Leave a breath upon my wings,
 That above these nether things
 I may rise to where Thou art,

I may flutter next Thine heart !
 For if a light within me burn,
 It must be darkness in an urn,
 Unless, within its crystalline,
 That unbeginning light of Thine
 Shine ! oh, Saviour, *let* it shine !

He is the last of our Greeks. The light from Troy city, with which all Greek glory began, "threw three-times six," said Æschylus, that man with a soul, — beacon after beacon, into the heart of Greece. "Three-times six," too, threw the light from Greece, when her own heart-light had gone out like Troy's, onward along the ridges of time. Three-times six — but what faint beacons are the last ! — sometimes only a red brand ; sometimes only a small trembling flame ; sometimes only a white glimmer as of ashes breathed on by the wind ; faint beacons and far ! How far ! We have watched them along the cloudy tops of the great centuries, through the ages dark but for them, — and now stand looking with eyes of farewell upon the last pale sign on the last mist-bound hill. But it is the sixteenth century. Beyond the ashes on the hill a red light is gathering ; above the falling of the dew's a great sun is rising : there is a rushing of life and song upward — let it still be UPWARD ! Shakespeare is in the world ! And the Genius of English Poetry, she who only of all the earth is worthy (Goethe's spirit may hear us say so, and smile), stooping, with a royal gesture, to kiss the dead lips of the Genius of Greece, stands up her successor in the universe, by virtue of that chrism, and in right of her own crown.

THE BOOK OF THE POETS.

THE BOOK OF THE POETS.

THE voice of the turtle is heard in the land. The green book of the earth is open, and the four winds are turning the leaves : while Nature, chief secretary to the creative Word, sits busy at her inditing of many a lovely poem, — her “ Flower and the Leaf ” on this side, her “ Cuckoo and the Nightingale ” on that, her “ Paradise of Dainty Devices ” in and out among the valleys, her “ Polyolbion ” away across the hills, her “ Britannia’s Pastorals ” on the home meadows, her sonnets of tufted primroses, her lyrical outgushings of May blossoming, her epical and didactic solemnities of light and shadow, and many an illustrative picture to garnish the universal annual. What book shall we open side by side with Nature’s ? First, the book of God. “ The Book of the Poets ” may well come next — even this book, if it deserve indeed the nobility of its name.

But this book, which is not Campbell’s Selection from the British Poets, nor Southey’s, nor different from either by being better, resembles many others of the nobly named, whether princes or hereditary legislators, in bearing a name too noble for its desert. This book, consisting of short extracts from the books of the poets, beginning with Chaucer, ending with Beattie, and missing sundry by the way, — we call it indefinitely “ A book of the poets,” and leave it thankful. The extracts from Chaucer are topsyturvy — one from the Canterbury Tales’ prologue

thrown in between two from the Knight's Tale ; while Gower may blame "his fortune" —

(And some men hold opinion
That it is constellation,)

for the dry specimen crumbled off from his manmountainism. Of Lydgate there is scarcely a page ; of Occleve, Hawes, and Skelton — the two last especially interesting in poetical history ; of Sackville, and the whole generation of dramatists, not a word. "The table is not full," and the ringing on it of Phillips's "Splendid Shilling" will not bribe us to endurance. What ! place for Pomfret's platitudes, and no place for Shakespeare's divine sonnets ? and no place for Jonson's and Fletcher's lyrics ? Do lyrics and sonnets perish out of place whenever their poets make tragedies too, quenched by the entity of tragedy ? We suggest that Shakespeare has nearly as much claim to place in any possible book of the poets (though also a book of the poetasters) as ever can have John Hughes, who "as a poet, is chiefly known," saith the critical editor, "by his tragedy of the 'Siege of Damascus.'" Let this book therefore accept our boon, and remain a book of the poets, thankfully if not gloriously, — while we, on our own side, may be thankful too, that in the present days of the millennium of Jeremy Bentham — a more literally golden age than the laureates of Saturnus dreamed withal — any memory of the poets should linger with the booksellers, and "come up this way" with the spring. The thing is good, in that it is at all. Send a little child into a garden, and he will be sure to bring you a nosegay worth having, though the red weed in it

should "side the lily," and sundry of the prettiest flowers be held stalk upwards. Flowers are flowers and poets are poets, and "A book of the poets" must be right welcome at every hour of the clock.

For the preliminary essay, which is very moderately well done, we embrace it, with our fingers at least, in taking up the volume. It pleases us better on the solitary point of the devotional poets than Mr. Campbell's beautiful treatise, doing, as it seems to us, more frank justice to the Witherses, the Quarleses, and the Crashaws. Otherwise the criticism and philosophy to be found in it are scarcely of the happiest, — although even the first astonishing paragraph which justifies the utility of poetry on the ground of its being an attractive variety of language, a persuasive medium for abstract ideas (as reasonable were the justification of a seraph's essence deduced from the cloud beneath his foot!) — shall not provoke us back to discontent from the vision of the poets of England suggested by the title of this "Book," and stretching along gloriously to our survey.

Our poetry has an heroic genealogy. It arose, where the sun rises, in the far East. It came out from Arabia, and was tilted on the lance-heads of the Saracens into the heart of Europe, Armorica catching it in rebound from Spain, and England from Armorica. It issued in its first breath from Georgia, wrapt in the gathering-cry of Persian Odin: and passing from the orient of the sun to the antagonistic snows of Iceland, and oversweeping the black pines of Germany and the jutting shores of Scandinavia, and embodying in itself all wayside sounds, even to the rude shouts of the brazen-throated Cimbri, — so modified, multiplied, resonant in a thousand Runic echoes, it rushed abroad

like a blast into Britain. In Britain, the Arabic Saracenic Armorican, and the Georgian Gothic Scandinavian mixed sound at last; and the dying suspirations of the Grecian and Latin literatures, the last low stir of the "Gesta Romanorum," with the apocryphal personations of lost authentic voices, breathed up together through the fissures of the rent universe, to help the new intonation and accomplish the cadence. Genius was thrust onward to a new slope of the world. And soon, when simpler minstrels had sat there long enough to tune the ear of the time, — when Layamon and his successors had hummed long enough, like wild bees, upon the lips of our infant poetry predestined to eloquence, — then Robert Langland, the monk, walking for cloister "by a wode's syde," on the Malvern Hills, took counsel with his holy "Plowman," and sang of other visions than their highest ridge can show. While we write, the woods upon those beautiful hills are obsolete, even as Langland's verses; scarcely a shrub grows upon the hills; but it is well for the thinkers of England to remember reverently, while, taking thought of her poetry, they stand among the gorse, — that if we may boast now of more honoured localities, of Shakespeare's "rocky Avon," and Spenser's "soft-streaming Thames," and Wordsworth's "Rydal Mere," still our first holy poet-ground is there.

But it is in Chaucer we touch the true height, and look abroad into the kingdoms and glories of our poetical literature, — it is with Chaucer that we begin our "Books of the Poets," our collections and selections, our pride of place and name. And the genius of the poet shares the character of his position: he was made for an early poet, and the metaphors of dawn

and spring doubly become him. A morning-star, a lark's exaltation, cannot usher in a glory better. The "cheerful morning face," "the breezy call of incense-breathing morn," you recognize in his countenance and voice : it is a voice full of promise and prophecy. He is the good omen of our poetry, the "good bird," according to the Romans, "the best good angel of the spring," the nightingale, according to his own creed of good luck, heard before the cuckoo.

Up rose the sunne, and uprose Emilie,

and uprose her poet, the first of a line of kings, conscious of futurity in his smile. He is a king and inherits the earth, and expands his great soul smilingly to embrace his great heritage. Nothing is too high for him to touch with a thought, nothing too low to dower with an affection. As a complete creature cognate of life and death, he cries upon God, — as a sympathetic creature he singles out a daisy from the universe ("si douce est la marguerite"), to lie down by half a summer's day and bless it for fellowship. His senses are open and delicate, like a young child's — his sensibilities capacious of supersensual relations, like an experienced thinker's. Child-like, too, his tears and smiles lie at the ledge of his eyes, and he is one proof more among the many, that the deepest pathos and the quickest gaieties hide together in the same nature. He is too wakeful and curious to lose the stirring of a leaf, yet not too wide awake to see visions of green and white ladies between the branches ; and a fair house of fame and a noble court of love are built and holden in the winking of his eyelash. And because his imagination is neither too "high fantastical"

to refuse proudly the gravitation of the earth, nor too "light of love" to lose it carelessly, he can create as well as dream, and work with clay as well as cloud; and when his men and women stand close by the actual ones, your stop-watch shall reckon no difference in the beating of their hearts. He knew the secret of nature and art, — that truth is beauty, — and saying "I will make 'A wife of Bath' as well as Emilie, and you shall remember her as long," we do remember her as long. And he sent us a train of pilgrims, each with a distinct individuality apart from the pilgrimage, all the way from Southwark and the Tabard Inn, to Canterbury and Becket's shrine: and their laughter comes never to an end, and their talk goes on with the stars, and all the railroads which may intersect the spoilt earth for ever cannot hush the "tramp, tramp" of their horses' feet.

Controversy is provocative. We cannot help observing, because certain critics observe otherwise, that Chaucer utters as true music as ever came from poet or musician; that some of the sweetest cadences in all our English are extant in his — "swete upon his tongue" in completest modulation. Let "Denham's strength and Waller's sweetness join" the *Io Pæan* of a later age, the *eurekamen* of Pope and his generation. Not one of the "Queen Anne's men," measuring out tuneful breath upon their fingers, like ribbons for topknots, did know the art of versification as the old rude Chaucer knew it. Call him rude for the picturesqueness of the epithet; but his verse has, at least, as much regularity in the sense of true art, and more manifestly in proportion to our increasing acquaintance with his dialect and pronunciation, as can be discovered or dreamed in the French school.

Critics indeed have set up a system based upon the crushed atoms of first principles, maintaining that poor Chaucer wrote by accent only ! Grant to them that he counted no verses on his fingers ; grant that he never disciplined his highest thoughts to walk up and down in a paddock — ten paces and a turn ; grant that his singing is not after the likeness of their singing : but there end your admissions. It is our ineffaceable impression, in fact, that the whole theory of accent and quantity held in relation to ancient and modern poetry stands upon a fallacy, totters rather than stands ; and that when considered in connection with such old moderns as our Chaucer, the fallaciousness is especially apparent. Chaucer wrote by quantity, just as Homer did before him, just as Goethe did after him, just as all poets must. Rules differ, principles are identical. All rhythm presupposes quantity. Organ-pipe, or harp, the musician plays by time. Greek or English, Chaucer or Pope, the poet sings by time. What is this accent but a stroke, an emphasis, with a successive pause to make complete the time ? And what is the difference between this accent and quantity but the difference between a harp-note and an organ-note ? otherwise, quantity expressed in different ways ? It is as easy for matter to subsist out of space, as music out of time.

Side by side with Chaucer comes Gower, who is ungratefully disregarded too often, because side by side with Chaucer. He who rides in the king's chariot will miss the people's "hic est." Could Gower be considered apart, there might be found signs in him of an independent royalty, however his fate may seem to lie in waiting for ever in his brother's antechamber, like Napoleon's tame kings. To

speak our mind, he has been much undervalued. He is nailed to a comparative degree ; and everybody seems to make it a condition of speaking of him, that something be called inferior within him, and something superior out of him. He is laid down flat, as a dark background for "throwing out" Chaucer's lights ; he is used as a *ποῦ στῶ* for leaping up into the empyrean of Chaucer's praise. This is not just nor worthy. His principal poem, the "Confessio Amantis," preceded the "Canterbury Tales," and proves an abundant fancy, a full head and full heart, and neither ineloquent. We do not praise its design, — in which the father-confessor is set up as a storyteller, like the Bishop of Tricca, "*avec l'âme*," like the Cardinal de Retz, "*le moins ecclésiastique du monde*," — while we admit that he tells his stories as if born to the manner of it, and that they are not much the graver, nor, peradventure, the holier either, for the circumstance of the confessorship. They are indeed told gracefully and pleasantly enough, and if with no superfluous life and gesture, with an active sense of beauty in some sort, and as flowing a rhythm as may bear comparison with many octosyllabics of our day ; Chaucer himself having done more honour to their worth as stories than we can do in our praise, by adopting and crowning several of their number for king's sons within his own palaces. And this recalls that, at the opening of one glorious felony, the *Man of Lawes Tale*, he has written, a little unlawfully and ungratefully considering the connection, some lines of harsh significance upon poor Gower, — whence has been conjectured by the grey gossips of criticism, a literary jealousy, an unholy enmity, nothing less than a soul-chasm between the contemporary poets. We

believe nothing of it ; no, nor of the Shakespeare and Jonson feud after it —

To alle such cursed stories we saie fy.

That Chaucer wrote in irritation is clear : that he was angry seriously and lastingly, or beyond the pastime of passion spent in a verse as provoked by a verse, there appears to us no reason for crediting. But our idea of the nature of the irritation will expound itself in our idea of the offence, which is here in Dan Gower's proper words, as extracted from the *Ladie Venus's* speech in the "*Confessio Amantis*."

And grete well Chaucer whan ye mete,
As my disciple and poëte ! —

.
Forthy now in his daiës old,
Thou shalt him tellë this message,
That he upon his latter age,
To sette an ende of alle his werke
As he who is mine ownë clerke,
Do make his testament of love.

We would not slander Chaucer's temper, — we believe, on the contrary, that he had the sweetest temper in the world, — and still it is our conviction, none the weaker, that he was far from being entirely pleased by this "message." We are sure he did not like the message, and not many poets would. His "elvish countenance" might well grow dark, and "his sugred mouth" speak somewhat sourly, in response to such a message. Decidedly, in our own opinion, it was an impertinent message, a provocative message, a most inexcusable and odious message !

Waxing hotter ourselves the longer we think of it, there is the more excuse for Chaucer. For, consider, gentle reader ! this indecorous message preceded the appearance of the "Canterbury Tales," and proceeded from a rival poet in the act of completing his principal work, — its plain significance being "I have done my poem, and you cannot do yours because you are superannuated." And this, while the great poet addressed was looking forward farther than the visible horizon, his eyes dilated with a mighty purpose. And to be counselled by this, to shut them forsooth, and take his crook and dog and place in the valleys like a grey shepherd of the Pyrenees — he, who felt his foot strong upon the heights ! he, with no wrinkle on his forehead deep enough to touch the outermost of inward smooth dreams — he, in the divine youth of his healthy soul, in the quenchless love of his embracing sympathies, in the untired working of his perpetual energies, — to "make an ende of alle his werke" and be old, as if he were not a poet ! "Go to, O vain man," — we do not reckon the age of the poet's soul by the shadow on the dial ! Enough that it falls upon his grave.

Occleve and Lydgate both breathed the air of the world while Chaucer breathed it, although surviving him so long as rather to take standing as his successors than contemporaries. Both called him "master" with a faithful reverting tenderness, and, however we are bound to distinguish Lydgate as the higher poet of the two, Occleve's "Alas" may become the other's lips —

Alas, that thou thine excellent prudence
In thy bed mortell mightest not bequeath !

For alas ! it was not bequeathed. Lydgate's "Thebaid," attached by its introduction to the "Canterbury Tales," gives or enforces the occasion for sighing comparisons with the master's picturesque vivacity, while equally in delicacy and intenseness we admit no progress in the disciple. He does, in fact, appear to us so much overrated by the critics, that we are tempted to extend to his poetry his own admission on his monkish dress, —

I wear a habit of perfection
Although my life agree not with that same,

and to opine concerning the praise and poetry taken together, that the latter agrees not with that same. An elegant poet — "poeta elegans" was he called by the courteous Pits, — a questionable compliment in most cases, while the application in the particular one agrees not with that same. An improver of the language he is granted to be by all ; and a voluminous writer of respectable faculties, in his position, could scarcely help being so : he has flashes of genius, but they are not prolonged to the point of warming the soul, — can strike a bold note, but fails to hold it on, — attains to moments of power and pathos, but wears, for working days, no habit of perfection.

These are our thoughts of Lydgate ; and yet when he ceased his singing, none sang better ; there was silence in the land. In Scotland, indeed, poet-tongues were not all mute ; the air across the borders "gave delight and hurt not." Here in the South it was otherwise : and unless we embrace in our desolation such *poems* as the rhyming chronicles of Harding and Fabian, we must hearken for music to the clashing

of "Bilboa blades," and be content that the wars of the red and white roses should silence the warbling of the nightingales. That figure dropped to our pen's point, and the reader may accept it as a figure — as no more. To illustrate by figures the times and the seasons of poetical manifestation and decay, is at once easier and more reasonable than to attempt to account for them by causes. We do not believe that poets multiply in peace-time like sheep and sheaves, nor that they fly, like partridges, at the first beating of the drum; and we do believe, having a previous faith in the pneumatic character of their gift, that the period of its bestowment is not subject to the calculations of our philosophy. Let, therefore, the long silence from Chaucer and his disciples down to the sixteenth century be left standing as a fact undisturbed by any good reasons for its existence, or by any other company than some harmless metaphor — harmless and ineffectual as a glow-worm's glitter at the foot of a colossal statue of Harpocrates. Call it, if you please, as Warton does, "a nipping frost succeeding a premature spring;" or call it, because we would not think our Chaucer premature, or the silence cruel — the trance of English Poetry: her breath, once emitted creatively, indrawn and retained, — herself sinking into deep sleep, like the mother of Apollonius before the glory of a vision, to awaken, to leap up (*ἐξέθορε* says Philostratus, the narrator) in a flowery meadow, at the clapping of the white wings of a chorus of encircling swans. We shall endeavour to realise this awaking.

Is Hawes a swan — a black (letter) swan? Certain voices will "say nay, say nay;" and already, and without our provocation, he seems to us unjustly depreciated. Warton was called "the indulgent

historian of our poetry," for being so kind as to discover "one fine line" in him! What name must the over-kind have, in whose susceptible memories whole passages stand up erect, claiming the epithet or the like of the epithet, — and that, less as the largess of the indulgent than the debt of the just? Yet Langland's "Piers Plowman," and Chaucer's "House of Fame," and Lydgate's "Temple of Glasse," and the "Pastyme of Plesure," by Stephen Hawes, are the four columnar marbles, the four allegorical poems, on whose foundation is exalted into light the great allegorical poem of the world, Spenser's "Faery Queen." There was a force of suggestion which preceded Sackville's, and Hawes uttered it. His work is very grave for a pastime, being a course of instruction upon the seven sciences, the trivium and quadrivium of the schools; whereby Grand Amour, scholar and hero, wooing and winning Belle Pucelle, marries her according to the *lex ecclesiæ*, is happy "all the rest of his life" by the *lex* of all matrimonial romances, — and, at leisure and in old age, dies by the *lex naturæ*. He tells his own story quite to an end, including the particulars of his funeral and epitaph; and is considerate enough to leave the reader in full assurance of his posthumous reputation. And now let those who smile at the design dismiss their levity before the poet's utterance: —

O mortall folke, you may beholde and see
Howe I lye here, sometime a mighty knight.
The ende of joye and all prosperitie
Is death at last thorough his course and might.
After the day there cometh the dark night,
For though the day appear ever so long,
At last the bell ringeth to even song,

— it “ringeth” in our ear with a soft and solemn music to which the soul is prodigal of echoes. We may answer for the poetic faculty of its “maker.” He is, in fact, not merely ingenious and fanciful, but abounds — the word, with an allowance for the unhappiness of his subject, is scarcely too strong, — with passages of thoughtful sweetness and cheerful tenderness, at which we are constrained to smile and sigh, and both for “pastyme.”

Was never payne but it had joye at laste
In the fayre morrow.

There is a lovely cadence ! And then Amour’s courtship of his “swete ladie” — a “cynosure” before Milton’s ! — conducted as simply, yet touchingly, as if he were innocent of the seven deadly sciences, and knew no more of “the Ladye Grammere” than might become a troubadour : —

O swete ladie, the true and perfect star
Of my true heart ! O, take ye now pitie !
Think on my payne which am tofore you here,—
With your swete eyes behold you me, and see
How thought and woe by great extremitie
Hath changed my colour into pale and wan !
It was not so when I to love began.

The date assigned to this “Pastyme of Plesure” is 1506, some fifty years before the birth of Spenser. Whether it was written in vain for Spenser, judge ye. To the present generation it is covered deep with the dust of more than three centuries, and few tongues ask above the place, “What lies here ?”

Barclay is our next swan ; and verily might be mistaken, in any sort taken, by naturalists, for a crow.

He is our first writer of eclogues, the translator of the "Ship of Fools," and a thinker of his own thoughts with sufficient intrepidity.

Skelton "floats double, swan and shadow," as poet laureate of the University of Oxford, and "royal orator" of Henry VII. He presents a strange specimen of a court-poet, and if, as Erasmus says, "*Britannicarum literarum lumen*" at the same time, — the light is a pitchy torchlight, wild and rough. Yet we do not despise Skelton: despise him? it were easier to hate. The man is very strong; he triumphs, foams, is rabid, in the sense of strength; he mesmerises our souls with the sense of strength — it is as easy to despise a wild beast in a forest, as John Skelton, poet laureate. He is as like a wild beast as a poet laureate can be. In his wonderful dominion over language, he tears it, as with teeth and paws, ravenously, savagely: devastating rather than creating, dominant rather for liberty than for dignity. It is the very *sans-culottism* of eloquence; the oratory of a Silenus drunk with anger only. Mark him as the satyr of poets! fear him as the Juvenal of satyrs! and watch him with his rugged, rapid, picturesque savageness, his "breathless rhymes," to use the fit phrase of the satirist Hall, or —

His rhymes all ragged,
Tattered, and jagged,

to use his own, — climbing the high trees of Delphi, and pelting from thence his victim underneath, whether priest or cardinal, with rough-rinded apples! And then ask, could he write otherwise than so? The answer is this opening to his poem of the "Bouge of Court," and the impression inevitable, of the serious

sense of beauty and harmony to which it gives evidence.

In autumn when the sun *in virgine*
By radiant heat enripened hath our corne,
When Luna, full of mutabilitie,
As empëress, the diadem hath worne
Of our pole Arctic, smiling as in scorn
At our folie and our unstedfastnesse —

But our last word of Skelton must be, that we do not doubt his influence for good upon our language. He was a writer singularly fitted for beating out the knots of the cordage, and straining the lengths to extension ; a rough worker at rough work. Strong, rough Skelton ! We can no more deride him than my good lord cardinal could. If our critical eyebrows must motion contempt at somebody of the period, we choose Tusser, and his “ Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry and Housewifery.” Whatever we say of Tusser, no fear of harming a poet, —

Make ready a bin
For chaff to lie in,

and there may be room *therein*, in compliment to the author of the proposition, for his own verses.

Lord Surrey passes as the tuner of our English nearly up to its present pitch of delicacy and smoothness ; and we admit that he had a melody in his thoughts which they dared not disobey. That he is, as has been alleged by a chief critic, “ our first metrical writer,” lies not in our creed ; and even Turberville’s more measured praise, —

Our mother tongue by him hath got such lyght,
That ruder speche thereby is banisht qwyht, —

we have difficulty in accepting. We venture to be of opinion that he did not belong to that order of master-minds with whom transitions originate, although qualified, by the quickness of a yielding grace, to assist effectually a transitional movement. There are names which catch the proverbs of praise as a hedge-thorn catches sheep's wool, by position and approximation rather than adaptitude: and this name is of them. Yet it is a high name. His poetry makes the ear lean to it, it is so sweet and low; the English he made it of being ready to be sweet, and falling ripe in sweetness into other hands than his. For the poems of his friend, Sir Thomas Wyatt, have more thought, freedom and variety, more general earnestness, more of the attributes of masterdom, than Lord Surrey's; while it were vain to reproach for lack of melody the writer of that loveliest lyric, "My lute, be still." And Wyatt is various in metres, and the first song-writer (that praise we must secure to him) of his generation. For the rest, there is an inequality in the structure of his verses which is very striking and observable in Surrey himself: as if the language, consciously insecure in her position, were balancing her accentual being and the forms of her pronunciation, half giddily, on the very turning point of transition. Take from Wyatt such a stanza as this, for instance, —

The long love that in my thoughts I harbour,
And in my heart doth keep his residence,
Into my face presseth with bold pretence,
And there campeth, displaying his banner

and oppose to it the next example, polished as Pope,—

But I am here in Kent and Christendom,
 Among the Muses where I read and rhyme ;
 Where, if thou list, mine own John Pains, to come,
 Thou shalt be judge how I do spend my time.

It is well to mark Wyatt as a leader in the art of didactic poetic composition under the epistolary form, "sternly milde" (as Surrey said of his countenance) in the leaning toward satire. It is very well to mark many of his songs as of exceeding beauty, and as preserving clear their touching simplicity from that plague of over-curious conceits which infest his writings generally. That was the plague of Italian literature transmitted by contagion, together with better things — together with the love of love-lore, and the sonnet structure, the summer-bower for one fair thought, delighted in and naturalised in England by Wyatt and Surrey. For the latter,—

From Tuscan came his ladye's worthy race :

and his Muse as well as Geraldine. Drops from Plato's cup, passing through Petrarch's, not merely perfumed and coloured but diluted by the medium, we find in Surrey's cup also. We must not under-praise Surrey to balance the over-praise we murmur at. Denying him supremacy as a reformer, the denial of his poetic nobleness is far from us. We attribute to him the chivalry of the *light* ages ; we call him a scholastic troubadour. The longest and most beautiful of his poems ("describing the lover's whole state") was a memory in the mind of Milton when he wrote his "Allegro." He has that measure of pathos whose expression is no gesture of passion, but the

skilful fingering on a well-tuned lute. He affects us at worst not painfully, and

With easie sighs such as folks draw in love.

He wrote the first English blank verse, in his translation of two books of the *Æneid*. He leads, in seeming, to the ear of the world, and by predestination of "popular breath," that little choral swan-chant which, swelled by Wyatt, Vaux, Bryan, and others, brake the common air in the days of the eighth Henry. And he fulfilled in sorrow his awarded fate as a poet, his sun going down at noon — and the cleft head, with its fair youthful curls, testifying like that fabled head of Orpheus to the music of the living tongue.

Sackville, Lord Dorset, takes up the new blank verse from the lips of Surrey, and turns it to its right use of tragedy. We cannot say that he does for it much more. His "*Gorboduc*," with some twenty years between it and Shakespeare, is farther from the true drama in versification and all the rest than "*Gammer Gurton*" is from "*Gorboduc*." Sackville's blank verse, like Lord Surrey's before him, is only heroic verse without rhyme: and we must say so in relation to Gascoigne, who wrote the second blank verse tragedy, the "*Jocasta*," and the first blank verse original poem, "*The Steele Glass*." The secret of the blank verse of Shakespeare, and Fletcher, and Milton did not dwell with them: the arched cadence, with its artistic key-stone and under-flood of broad continuous sound, was never achieved nor attempted by its first builders. We sometimes whisper in our silence that Marlowe's "brave sublunary" instincts should have groped that way. But no! Chaucer had

more sense of music in the pause than Marlowe had. Marlowe's rhythm is not, indeed, hard and stiff and uniform, like the sentences of "Gorboduc," as if the pattern-one had been cut in boxwood: there is a difference between uniformity and monotony, and he found it; his cadence revolves like a wheel, progressively if slowly and heavily, and with an orbicular grandeur of unbroken and unvaried music.

It remains to us to speak of the work by which Sackville is better known than by "Gorboduc," — the "Mirror for Magistrates." The design of it has been strangely praised, seeing that whatever that peculiar merit were, Lydgate's "Fall of Princes" certainly cast the shadow before. But Sackville's commencement of the execution proved the master's hand; and that the great canvas fell abandoned to the blurring brushes of inadequate disciples, was an ill-fortune compensated adequately by the honour attributed to the Induction — of inducing a nobler genius than his own, even Spenser's, to a nobler labour. We cannot doubt the influence of that Induction. Its colossal figures, in high allegorical relief, were exactly adapted to impress the outspread fancy of the most sensitive of poets. A yew-tree cannot stand at noon in an open pleasaunce without throwing the outline of its branches on the broad and sunny grass. Still, admitting the suggestion in its fulness, nothing can differ more than the allegorical results of the several geniuses of Lord Dorset and Spenser. Tear-drop and dew-drop respond more similarly to analysis; or morbid grief and ideal joy. Sackville stands close wrapt in the "blanket of his dark," and will not drop his mantle for the sun. Spenser's business is with the lights of the world, and the lights beyond the world.

But this Sackville, this Earl of Dorset ("Oh, a fair earl was he!"), stands too low for admeasurement with Spenser: and we must look back, if covetous of comparisons, to some one of a loftier and more kingly stature. We must look back far, and stop at Chaucer. Spenser and Chaucer do naturally remind us of each other, they two being the most cheerful hearted of the poets — with whom cheerfulness, as an attribute of poetry, is scarcely a common gift. But the world will be upon us! The world moralises of late, and in its fashion, upon the immorality of mournful poems, upon the criminality of "melodious tears," upon the morbidness of the sorrows of poets, — because Lord Byron was morbidly sorrowful, and because a crowd of his ephemeral imitators hung their heads all on one side and were insincerely sorrowful. The fact, however, has been, apart from Lord Byron and his disciples, that the "*ai ai*" of Apollo's flower is vocally sad in the prevailing majority of poetical compositions. The philosophy is, perhaps, that the poetic temperament, halfway between the light of the ideal and the darkness of the real, and rendered by each more sensitive to the other, and unable, without a struggle, to pass out clear and calm into either, bears the impress of the necessary conflict in dust and blood. The philosophy may be, that only the stronger spirits do accomplish this victory, having lordship over their own genius; whether they accomplish it by looking bravely to the good ends of evil things, which is the practical ideal, and possible to all men in a measure — or by abstracting the inward sense from sensual things and their influences, which is subjectivity perfected — or by glorifying sensual things with the inward sense, which is objectivity transfigured — or by attaining to

the highest vision of the idealist, which is subjectivity turned outward into an actual objectivity.

To the last triumph Shakespeare attained ; but Chaucer and Spenser fulfilled their destiny and grew to their mutual likeness as cheerful poets, by certain of the former processes. They two are alike in their cheerfulness, yet are their cheerfulnesses most unlike. Each poet laughs : yet their laughers ring with as far a difference as the sheep-bell on the hill and the joy-bell in the city. Each is earnest in his gladness : each active in persuading you of it. You are persuaded, and hold each for a cheerful man. The whole difference is, that Chaucer has a cheerful humanity : Spenser, a cheerful ideality. One, rejoices walking on the sunny side of the street : the other, walking out of the street in a way of his own, kept green by a blessed vision. One, uses the adroitness of his fancy by distilling out of the visible universe her occult smiles : the other, by fleeing beyond the possible frown, the occasions of natural ills, to that "cave of cloud" where he may smile safely to himself. One, holds festival with men — seldom so coarse and loud indeed as to startle the deer from their green covert at Woodstock — or with homely Nature and her "douce marguerite" low in the grasses : the other adopts, for his playfellows, imaginary or spiritual existences, and will not say a word to Nature herself, unless it please her to dress for his masque and speak daintily sweet and rare like a spirit. The human heart of one utters oracles ; the imagination of the other speaks for his heart, and we miss no prophecy. For music, we praised Chaucer's, and not only as Dryden did, for "a Scotch tune." But never issued there from lip or instrument, or the tuned causes of nature, more lovely

sound than we gather from our Spenser's Art. His mouth is vowed away from the very possibilities of harshness. Right leans to wrong in its excess. His rhythm is the continuity of melody, not harmony, because too smooth for modulation — because "by his vow" he dares not touch a discord for the sake of consummating a harmony. It is the singing of an angel in a dream: it has not enough of contrary for waking music. Of his great poem we may say, that we miss no humanity in it, because we make a new humanity out of it and are satisfied in our human hearts — as new humanity vivified by the poet's life, moving in happy measure to the chanting of his thoughts, and upon ground supernaturally beautified by his sense of the beautiful. As an allegory, it enchants us away from its own purposes. Una is Una to us; and Sans Foy is a traitor, and Errour is "an ugly monster," with a "tayle;" and we thank nobody in the world, not even Spenser, for trying to prove it otherwise. Do we dispraise an allegorical poem by throwing off its allegory? we trow not. Probably, certainly to our impression, the highest triumph of an allegory, from this of the "Faery Queen" down to the "Pilgrim's Progress," is the abnegation of itself.

Oh those days of Elizabeth! We call them the days of Elizabeth, but the glory fell over the ridge, in illumination of the half-century beyond: those days of Elizabeth! Full were they of poets as the summer-days are of birds, —

No branch on which a fine bird did not sit,
No bird but his sweet song did shrilly sing,
No song but did containe a lovely dit.

We hear of the dramatists, and shall speak of them presently; but the lyric singers were yet more numerous, — there were singers in every class. Never since the first nightingale brake voice in Eden arose such a jubilee-concert : never before nor since has such a crowd of true poets uttered true poetic speech in one day. Not in England ever more ! Not in Greece, that we know. Not in Rome, by what we know. Talk of their Augustan era — we will not talk of it, lest we desecrate our own of Elizabeth. The latter was rightly prefigured by our figure of the chorus of swans. It was besides the Milky Way of poetry : it was the miracle-age of poetical history. We may fancy that the master-souls of Shakespeare and Spenser, breathing, stirring in divine emotion, shot vibratory life through other souls in electric association : we may hear, in fancy, one wind moving every leaf in a forest — one voice responded to by a thousand rock-echoes. Why, a common man walking through the earth in those days grew a poet by position — even as a child's shadow cast upon a mountain slope is dilated to the aspect of a giant's.

If we, for our own parts, did enact a Briareus, we might count these poets on the fingers of our hundred hands, after the fashion of the poets of Queen Anne's time, counting their syllables. We do not talk of them as "faultless monsters," however wonderful in the multitude and verity of their gifts : their faults were numerous, too. Many poets of an excellent sweetness, thinking of poetry that, like love,

It was to be all made of fantasy, —

fell poetry-sick, as they might fall love-sick, and knotted associations, far and free enough to girdle the

earth withal, into true love-knots of quaintest devices. Many poets affected novelty rather than truth; and many attained to novelty rather by attitude than altitude, whether of thought or word. Worst of all, many were incompetent to Sir Philip Sidney's ordeal—the translation of their verses into prose—and would have perished utterly by that hot ploughshare. Still, the natural healthy eye turns toward the light, and the true calling of criticism remains the distinguishing of beauty. Love and honour to the poets of Elizabeth—honour and love to them all! Honour even to the fellow workers with Sackville in the “Mirror for Magistrates,” to Ferrers, Churchyard and others, who had their hand upon the ore if they did not clasp it! and to Warner, the poet of Albion's England, singing snatches of ballad-pathos, while he worked, for the most part heavily, too, with a bowed back as at a stiff soil—and to Gascoigne, reflecting beauty and light from his “Stele Glass,” though his “Fruites of War” are scarcely fruits from Parnassus—and to Daniel, tender and noble, and teaching, in his “Musophilus,” the chivalry of poets, though in his “Civil Wars” somewhat too historical, as Drayton has written of him—and to Drayton, generous in the “Polyolbion” of his poet-blessing on every hill and river through this fair England, and not ineloquent in his Heroical Epistles, though somewhat tame and level in his “Barons' Wars”—and to the two brother Fletchers, Giles and Phineas, authors of “Christ's Victory” and “The Purple Island,” for whom the Muse's kiss followed close upon the mother's, gifting their lips with no vulgar music and their house with that noble kinsman, Fletcher the dramatist! Honour, too,

to Davies, who "reasoned in verse" with a strong mind and strong enunciation, though he wrote one poem on the Soul and another on Dancing, and concentrated the diverging rays of intellect and folly in his sonnets on the reigning Astræa — and to Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke, who had deep thoughts enough to accomplish ten poets of these degenerate days, though because of some obscurity in their expression you would find some twenty critics "full of oaths" by the pyramids, that they all meant nought — and to Chamberlayne, picturesque, imaginative, earnest (by no means dramatic) in his poetic romance of "Pharonnida," though accumulative to excess of figures, and pedantic in such verbal learning as "entheon charms," the "catagraph" of a picture, the "exagitations and congestions of elements," *et sic omnia!* — to Chalkhill, wrapt, even bound, "in soft Lydian airs," till himself, as well as his Clearchus and Thealma, fall asleep in involutions of harmony — and to Browne, something languid in his "Britannia's Pastorals," by sitting in the sun with Guarini and Marini, and "perplexed in the extreme" by a thousand images and sounds of beauty calling him across the dewy fields — and to Wither, author of the "Shepherd's Hunting," and how much else? — Wither, who wrote of poetry like a poet, and in return has been dishonoured and misprised by some of his own kind — a true sincere poet of blessed oracles. Honour, love and praise to him and all! May pardon come to us from the unnamed.

Honour also to the translators of poems — to such as Chapman and Sylvester — great hearts, interpreters of great hearts, and afterwards worthily thanked by the Miltons, and Popes, and Keatses, for their gift of greatness to the language of their England.

Honour to the satirists ! to Marston, who struck boldly and coarsely at an offence from the same level with the offender — to Hall, preserving his own elevation, and flashing downwardly those thick lightnings in which we smell the sulphur — and to Donne, whose instinct to beauty overcame the resolution of his satiric humour.

Honour, again, to the singers of brief poems, to the lyrists and sonneteers ! O Shakespeare, let thy name rest gently among them, perfuming the place. We “swear” that these sonnets and songs do verily breathe, “not of themselves, but *thee* ;” and we recognise and bless them as short sighs from thy large poetic heart, burdened with diviner inspiration ! O rare Ben Jonson, let us have thy songs, rounded each with a spherical thought, and the lyrics from thy masques alive with learned fantasy, and thine epigrams keen and quaint, and thy noble epitaphs, under which the dead seem stirring ! Fletcher, thou shalt be with us — prophet of Comus and Penseroso ! giddy with inhalation from the fount of the beautiful, speaking out wildly thought upon thought, measure upon measure, as the bird sings, because his own voice is lovely to him. Sidney, true knight and fantastic poet, whose soul did too curiously inquire the fashion of the beautiful — the fashion rather than the secret, — but left us in one line the completest “*Ars Poetica*” extant, —

Foole, sayde my Muse to mee, looke in thine heart,
and write, —

thy name be famous in all England and Arcadia !
And Raleigh, tender and strong, of voice sweet enough

to answer that "Passionate Shepherd," yet trumpet-shrill to speak the "Soul's errand" thrilling the depths of our own ! having honour and suffering as became a poet, from the foot of the Lady of England light upon his cloak, to the cloak of his executioner wrapping redly his breathless corpse. Marlowe, — we must not forget his "Shepherd" in his tragedies : and "Come live with me" sounds passionately still through the dead cold centuries. And Drummond, the over-praised and under-praised, — a passive poet, if we may use the phraseology — who was not careful to achieve greatness, but whose natural pulses beat music, and with whom the consciousness of life was the sentiment of beauty. And Lyly, shriven from the sins of his Euphues, with a quaint grace in his songs ; and Donne, who takes his place naturally in this new class, having a dumb angel, and knowing more noble poetry than he articulates. Herrick, the Ariel of poets, sucking "where the bee sucks" from the rose-heart of nature, and reproducing the fragrance idealised ; and Carew, using all such fragrance as a courtly essence, with less of self-abandonment and more of artificial application ; and Herbert, with his face as the face of a spirit, dimly bright ; and fantastic Quarles, in rude and graphic gesticulation, expounding verity and glory ; and Breton, and Turberville, and Lodge, and Hall (not the satirist), and all the hundred swans, nameless or too numerous to be named, of that Cayster of the rolling time.

Then, high in the miraculous climax, come the dramatists — from whose sinews was knit the overcoming strength of our literature over all the nations of the world. "The drama is the executive of literature," said De Staël : and the Greek's "action,

action, action" we shall not miss in our drama. Honour to the dramatists, as honour from them!

We must take a few steps backward for position's sake, and then be satisfied with a rapid glance at the Drama. From the days of Norman William, the representations called Mysteries and Moralities had come and gone without a visible poet; and Skelton appears before us almost the first English claimant of a dramatic reputation, with the authorship of the interludes of "Magnificence" and the "Nigromansir." The latter is chiefly famous for Warton's affirmation of having held it in his hands, giving courteous occasion to Ritson's denial of its existence: and our own palms having never been crossed by the silver of either, we cannot prophesy on the degree of individual honour involved in the literary claim. Bale, one of the eighth Henry's bishops, was an active composer of Moralities; and John Heywood, his royal jester and "author of that very merry interlude" called *The Four P's*, united in his merriment that caustic sense with that lively ease which have not been too common since in his accomplished dramatic posterity. Yet those who in the bewilderment of their admirations (or senses) attribute to John Heywood the "Pinner of Wakefield," are more obviously — we are sorely tempted to add more ridiculously — wrong, than those who attribute it to Shakespeare. The Canon of Windsor's "Ralph Royster Doyster," and the Bishop of Bath and Wells's "Gammer Gurton," followed each other close into light, the earliest modern comedies, by the force of the *âme ecclésiastique*. A little after came Ferrys, memorialised by Puttenham as "the principall man of his profession" (of poetry), and "of no less myrthe and felicitie than John Hey-

wood, but of much more skille and magnificence in his meter." But seeing that even Oblivion forgot Ferrys, leaving his name and Puttenham's praise when she defaced his works, and seeing, too, the broad farcedom of the earlier, however episcopal, writers, we find ourselves in an unwilling posture of recognition before Edwards, as the first extant regular dramatist of England. It is a pitiful beginning. *The Four P's* would be a more welcome A to us. They express more power with their inarticulate roughness than does this "Damon and Pythias," with its rhymed, loitering frigidity, or even than this "Palamon and Arcite," in which the sound of the hunting horn cast into ecstasy the too gracious soul of Queen Elizabeth. But Sir John Davies's divine Astræa was, at that grey dawn of her day, ignorant of greater poets; and we ("happy in this") go on toward them. After Edwards, behold Sackville with that "Gorboduc" we have named, the first blank verse tragedy we can name, praised by Sidney for its exemplary preservation of the unities and for "climbing to the height of Seneca his stile," — tight-fitting praise, considering that the composition is high enough to account for its snow, and cold enough to emulate the Roman's. And after Sackville, behold the first dramatic geniuses, in juxtaposition with the first dramatists — Peele, and Kyd mad as his own Hieronimo (we will grant it to such critics as are too utterly in their senses), only —

When he is mad,
Then, methinks, he is a brave fellow !

and then, methinks, and by such madness, the possibility of a Shakespeare was revealed. Kyd's blank

verse is probably the first breaking of the true soil ; and certainly far better and more dramatic than Marlowe's is, — crowned poet as the latter stands before us — poet of the English Faustus, which we will not talk of against the German, nor set up its grand, luxurious, melancholy devil against Goethe's subtle, biting, Voltairish devil, each being devil after its kind, — the poet of the Jew which Shakespeare drew (not), yet a true Jew "with a berde," — and the poet of the first historical drama, — since the "Gorboduc" scarcely can be called one. Marlowe was more essentially a poet than a dramatist ; and if the remark appear self-evident and universally applicable, we will take its reverse in Kyd, who was more essentially, with all his dramatic faults, a dramatist than a poet. Passing from the sound of the elemental monotonies of the rhythm of Marlowe, we cannot pause before Nash and Greene to distinguish their characteristics. It is enough to name these names of gifted dramatists, who lived, or at least wrote, rather before Shakespeare than with him, and helped to make him credible. Through them, like a lens, we behold his light. Of them we conjecture — these are the blind elements working before the earthquake, — before the great "Shakescene," as Greene said when he was cross. And we may say when we are fanciful, these are the experiments of Nature, made in her solution of the problem of how much deathless poetry will agree with how much mortal clay — these are the potsherd vessels half filled, and failing at last, — until up to the edge of *one* the liquid inspiration rose and bubbled in hot beads to quench the thirsty lips of the world.

It is hard to speak of Shakespeare ; these measures of the statures of common poets fall from our hands

when we seek to measure him : it is harder to praise him. Like the tall plane-tree which Xerxes found standing in the midst of an open country, and honoured inappropriately with his "barbaric pomp," with bracelets and chains and rings suspended on its branches, so has it been with Shakespeare. A thousand critics have commended him with praises as unsuitable as a gold ring to a plane-tree. A thousand hearts have gone out to him, carrying necklaces. Some have discovered that he individualised, and some that he generalised, and some that he subtilised — almost *trans-transcendentally*. Some would have it that he was a wild genius, sowing wild oats and stealing deer to the end, with no more judgment forsooth than "youth the hare ;" and some, that his very pulses beat by that critical law of art in which he was blameless : — some, that all his study was in his horn-book, and not much of that ; and some, that he was as learned a polyglot as ever had been dull but for Babel : — some, that his own ideal burned steadfastly within his own fixed contemplations, unstirred by breath from without ; and some, that he wrote for the gold on his palm and the "rank popular breath" in his nostrils, apart from consciousness of greatness and desire of remembrance. If the opinions prove nothing, their contradictions prove the exaltation of the object ; their contradictions are praise. For men differ about things above their reach, not within it — about the mountains in the moon, not Primrose Hill : and more than seven cities of men have differed in their talk about Homer also. Homer, also, was convicted of indiscreet nodding ; and Homer, also, had no manner of judgment, and the *Ars Poetica* people could not abide his bad taste. And we find another

analogy. We, who have no leaning to the popular cant of Romanticism and Classicism, and believe the old Greek BEAUTY to be both new and old, and as alive and not more grey in Webster's "Duchess of Malfy" than in Æschylus's "Eumenides," do reverence this Homer and this Shakespeare as the colossal borderers of the two intellectual departments of the world's age, — do behold from their feet the antique and modern literatures sweep outwardly away, and conclude, that whereas the Greek bore in his depth the seed and prophecy of all the Hellenic and Roman poets, so did Shakespeare, "whose seed was in himself" also, those of a later generation.

For the rest we must speak briefly of Shakespeare, and very weakly too, except for love. That he was a great natural genius nobody, we believe, has doubted — the fact has passed with the cheer of mankind; but that he was a great artist the majority has doubted. Yet Nature and Art cannot be reasoned apart into antagonistic principles. Nature is God's art — the accomplishment of a spiritual significance hidden in a sensible symbol. Poetic art (man's) looks past the symbol with a divine guess and reach of soul into the mystery of the significance, — disclosing from the analysis of the visible things the synthesis or unity of the ideal, — and expounds like symbol and like significance out of the infinite of God's doing into the finite of man's comprehending. Art lives by Nature, and not the bare mimetic life generally attributed to Art: she does not imitate, she expounds. *Interpres nature* — is the poet-artist; and the poet wisest in nature is the most artistic poet: and thus our Shakespeare passes to the presidency unquestioned, as the greatest artist in the world. We believe in his judgment as in his

genius. We believe in his learning, both of books and men, and hills and valleys : in his grammars and dictionaries we do not believe. In his philosophy of language we believe absolutely : in his Babel-learning, not at all. We believe reverently in the miracle of his variety ; and it is observable that we become aware of it less by the numerousness of his persons and their positions, than by the *depth* of the least of either, — by the sense of visibility beyond what we see, as in nature. Our creed goes on to declare him most passionate and most rational — of an emotion which casts us into thought, of a reason which leaves us open to emotion : most grave and most gay — while we scarcely can guess that the man Shakespeare is grave or gay, because he interposes between ourselves and his personality the whole breadth and length of his ideality. His associative faculty, — the wit's faculty besides the poet's — for him who was both wit and poet, shed sparks like an electric wire. He was wise in the world, having studied it in his heart ; what is called "the knowledge of the world" being just the knowledge of one heart, and certain exterior symbols. What else ? What otherwise could he, the young transgressor of Sir Thomas Lucy's fences, new from Stratford and the Avon, close in theatric London, have seen or touched or handled of the Hamlets and Lears and Othellos, that he should draw them ? "How can I take portraits," said Marmontel, in a similar inexperience, "before I have beheld faces ?" Voltaire embraced him, in reply. Well applauded, Voltaire ! It was a *mot* for Marmontel's utterance, and Voltaire's praise — for Marmontel, not for Shakespeare. Every being is his own centre to the universe, and in himself must one foot

of the compasses be fixed to attain to any measurement : nay, every being is his own mirror to the universe. Shakespeare wrote from within — the beautiful ; and we recognise from within — the true. He is universal, because he is individual. And, without any prejudice of admiration, we may go on to account his faults to be the proofs of his power ; the cloud of dust cast up by the multitude of the chariots. The activity of his associative faculty is occasionally morbid : in the abundance of his winged thoughts, the locust flies with the bee, and the ground is dark with the shadow of them. Take faults, take excellences, it is impossible to characterise this Shakespeare by an epithet : have we heard the remark before, that it should sound so obvious ? We say of Corneille, the noble ; of Racine, the tender ; of Æschylus, the terrible ; of Sophocles, the perfect ; but not one of these words, not one appropriately descriptive epithet, can we attach to Shakespeare without a conscious recoil. Shakespeare ! the name is the description.

He is the most wonderful artist in blank verse of all in England, and almost the earliest. We do not say that he first broke the enchaining monotony, of which the Sackvilles and the Marlowes left us complaining ; because the versification of " Hieronimo " ran at its own strong will, and the " Pinner of Wakefield " may have preceded his first plays. We do not even say, what we might, that his hand first proved the compass and infinite modulation of the new instrument ; but we do say, that it never answered another hand as it answered his. We do say, this fingering was never learned of himself by another. From Massinger's more resonant majesty, from even Fletcher's more numerous and artful cadences, we turn back to

his artlessness of art, to his singular and supreme estate as a versificator. Often when he is at the sweetest, his words are poor monosyllables, his pauses frequent to brokenness, and the structure of the several lines less varied than was taught after Fletcher's masterdom; but the whole results in an ineffable charming of the ear which we acquiesce in without seeking its cause, a happy mystery of music.

This is little for Shakespeare; yet so much for the place, that we are forced into brevities for our observations which succeed. We chronicle only the names of Chapman, Dekker, Webster, Tourneur, Randolph, Middleton, and Thomas Heywood, although great names, and worthy, it is not too much to add, of Shakespeare's brotherhood. Many besides lean from our memory to the paper, but we put them away reverently. It was the age of the dramatists — the age of strong passionate men, scattering on every side their good and evil oracles of vehement humanity, and extenuating no thought in its word: and in that age "to write like a man" was a deed accomplished by many besides him of whom it was spoken, Jonson's "son Cartwright."

At Jonson's name we stop perforce, and do salutation in the dust to the impress of that "learned sock." He was a learned man, as everybody knows; and, as everybody does not believe, not the worse for his learning. His material, brought laboriously from East and West, is wrapped in a flame of his own. If the elasticity and abandonment of Shakespeare and of certain of Shakespeare's brothers are not found in his writings, the reason of the defects need not be sought out in his readings. His genius, high and verdant as it grew, yet belonged to the hard woods: it was

lance-wood rather than bow-wood — a genius rather noble than graceful — eloquent, with a certain severity and emphasis of enunciation. It would have been the same if he, too, had known “little Latin and lesse Greek.” There was a dash of the rhetorical in his dramatic. Not that we deny him empire over the passions: his heart had rhetoric as well as his understanding, and he wrote us a “Sad Shepherd,” as well as a “Catiline.” His versification heaves heavily with thought. For his comic powers, let “Volpone” and “The Alchymist” attest them with that unextinguishable laughter which is the laughter of gods or poets still more than of the wits’ coffee-house. Was it “done at the Mermaid,” was it ever fancied there that “rare Ben Jonson” should be called a pedantic poet? Nay, but only a scholastic one.

And Beaumont and Fletcher, the Castor and Pollux of this starry poetic sphere (*lucida sidera*), our silence shall not cover them; nor will we put asunder, in our speech, the names which friendship and poetry joined together, nor distinguish, by a laboured analysis, the vivacity of one from the solidity of the other; seeing that men who, according to tradition, lived in one house, and wore one cloak, and wrote on one page, may well, by the sanctity of that one grave they have also in common, maintain for ever beyond it the unity they coveted. The characteristics of these writers stand out in a softened light from the deep tragic background of the times. We may liken them to Shakespeare in one mood of his mind, because there are few classes of beauty the type or likeness of which is not discoverable in Shakespeare. From the rest they stand out contrastingly, as the Apollo of the later

Greek sculpture-school, — too graceful for divinity and too vivacious for marble, — placed in a company of the antiquer statues with their grand blind look of the almightiness of repose. We cannot say of these poets, as of the rest, “they write all like men ;” we cannot think they write like women either : perhaps they write a little like centaurs. We are of opinion in any way that the grace is more obvious than the strength ; and there may be something centauresque and of two-fold nature in their rushing mutabilities, and changes on passion and weakness. Clearest of all is that they wrote like poets, and in a versification most surpassingly musical though liberal, as if music served them for love’s sake, unbound. They had an excellent genius, but not a strong enough invention to include judgment ; judgment being the consistency of invention, and consistency always, whether in morals or literature, depending upon strength. We do not, in fact, find in them any perfect and covenanted whole — we do not find it in character, or in plot, or in composition ; and lamenting the defect on many grounds, we do so on this chief one, that their good is just good, their evil just evil, unredeemed into good like Shakespeare’s and Nature’s evil by unity of design, but lying apart, a willingly chosen, through and through evil — and “by this time it stinketh.” If other results are less lamentable, they are no less fatal. The mirror which these poets held up to us is vexed with a thousand cracks, and everything visible is in fragments. Their conceptions all tremble on a peradventure — “peradventure they shall do well :” there is no royal absolute will that they should do well : the poets are less kings than workmen. And being workmen they are weak — the moulds fall from their hands

— are clutched with a spasm or fall with a faintness. After which querulousness, we shall leave the question as to whether their tragic or comic powers be put to more exquisite use, — not for solution, nor for doubt (since we hold fast an opinion), but for praise the most rarely appropriate or possible.

One passing word of Ford, the pathetic — for he may wear on his sleeve the epithet of Euripides, and no daw peck there. Most tender is he, yet not to feebleness — most mournful, yet not to languor ; yet we like to hear the war-horse leaps of Dekker on the same tragic ground with him, producing at once contrast and completeness. Ungrateful thought ! the “ Witch of Edmonton ” bewitched us to it. Ford can fill the ear and soul singly with the trumpet-note of his pathos ; and in its pauses you shall hear the murmuring voices of nature, — such a nightingale, for instance, as never sang on a common night. Then that death scene in the “ Broken Heart ! ” who has equalled *that* ? It is single in the drama, — the tragic of tragedy, and the sublime of grief. A word, too, of Massinger, who writes all like a giant — a dry-eyed giant. He is too ostentatiously strong for flexibility, and too heavy for rapidity, and monotonous through his perpetual final trochee ; his gesture and enunciation are slow and majestic. And another word of Shirley, an inferior writer, though touched, to our fancy, with something of a finer ray, and closing, in worthy purple, the procession of the Elizabethan men. Shirley is the last dramatist. *Valete et plaudite, o posteri.*

Standing in his traces, and looking backward and before, we become aware of the distinct demarcations of five eras of English poetry : the first, the Chau-

cerian, although we might call it *Chaucer*; the second, the Elizabethan; the third, which culminates in Cowley; the fourth, in Dryden and the French school; the fifth, the return to nature in Cowper and his successors of our day. These five rings mark the age of the fair and stingless serpent we are impelled, like the ancient mariner, to bless — but not “unaware.” “*Ab benedicite!*” we bless her so, out of our Chaucer’s rubric, softly, but with a plaintiveness of pleasure. For when the last echo of the Elizabethan harmonies had died away with Shirley’s footsteps, in the twilight of that golden day; when Habington and Lovelace, and every last bird before nightfall was dumb, and Crashaw’s fine rapture, holy as a summer sense of silence, left us to the stars — the first voices startling the thinker from his reverting thoughts, are verily of another spirit. The voices are eloquent enough, thoughtful enough, fanciful enough; but something is defective. Can any one suffer, as an experimental reader, the transition between the second and third periods, without feeling that something is defective? What is so? And who dares to guess that it may be INSPIRATION?

“Poetry is of too spiritual a nature,” Mr. Campbell has observed, “to admit of its authors being exactly grouped by a Linnæan system of classification.” Nevertheless, from those subtle influences which poets render and receive, and from other causes less obvious but no less operative, it has resulted, even to ourselves in this slight survey of the poets of our country, that the signs used by us simply as signs of historical demarcation have naturally fallen or risen into signs of poetical classification. The five eras we spoke of just now have indeed each a characteristic as clear in poetry

as in chronology ; and a deeper gulf than an *Anno Domini* yawns betwixt an Elizabethan man and a man of that third era upon which we are entering. The change of the poetical characteristic was not, indeed, without gradation. The hands of the clock had been moving silently for a whole hour before the new one struck ; and even in Davies, even in Drayton, we felt the cold foreshadow of a change. The word “sweetness,” which presses into our sentences against the will of our rhetoric whenever we speak of Shakespeare (“sweetest Shakespeare”) or his kin, we lose the taste of in the later waters ; they are brackish with another age.

In what did the change consist ? Practically and partially in the idol-worship of *rhyme*. Among the elder poets, the rhyme was only a felicitous adjunct, a musical accompaniment, the tinkling of a cymbal through the choral harmonies. You heard it across the changes of the pause, as an undertone of the chant, marking the time with an audible indistinctness, and catching occasionally and reflecting the full light of the emphasis of the sense in mutual elucidation. But the new practice endeavoured to identify in all possible cases the rhyme and what may be called the sentimental emphasis ; securing the latter to the tenth rhyming *syllable*, and so dishonouring the emphasis of the sentiment into the base use of the marking of the time. And not only by this unnatural provision did the emphasis minister to the rhyme, but the pause did it also. “Away with all pauses,” — said the reformers, — “except the legitimate pause at the tenth rhyming syllable. O rhyme, live for ever ! Rhyme alone take the incense from our altars, — tinkling cymbal alone be our music !” — And so arose, in dread insignificance, the Heart-and-impart men.

Moreover, the corruption of the versification was but a type of the change in the poetry itself, and sufficiently expressive. The accession to the throne of the poets, of the *wits* in the new current sense of the term, or of the *beaux esprits* — a term to be used the more readily because descriptive of the actual pestilential influence of French literature — was accompanied by the substitution of elegant thoughts for poetic conceptions (“elegant,” alas! beginning to be the critical pass-word), of adroit illustrations for beautiful images, of ingenuity for genius. Yet this third era is only the preparation for the fourth consummating one — the hesitation before the crime: we smell the blood through it in the bath-room. And our fancy grows hysterical, like poor Octavia, while the dismal extent of the “quantum mutatus” develops itself in detail.

“Waller’s sweetness!” it is a needy antithesis to Denham’s strength — and, if anything beside, a sweetness as far removed from that which we have lately recognised, as the saccharine of the palate from the melodious of the ear. Will Saccharissa frown at our comparison from the high sphere of his verse? or will she, a happy “lady who can sleep when she pleases,” please to oversleep our offence? It is certain that we but walk in her footsteps in our disdain of her poet, even if we disdain him — and most seriously we disown any such partaking of her “cruelty.” Escaping from the first astonishment of an unhappy transition, and from what is still more vexing, those “base, common, and popular” critical voices, which, in and out of various “arts of poetry,” have been pleased to fix upon this same transitional epoch as the genesis of excellence to our language and versification, we do

not, we hope it of ourselves, undervalue Waller. There is a certain grace "beyond the reach of art," or rather beyond the destructive reach of his ideas of art, to which, we opine, if he had not been a courtier and a renegade, the Lady Dorothea might have bent her courtly head unabashed, even as the Penshurst beeches did. We gladly acknowledge in him, as in Denham and other poets of the transition, an occasional remorseful recurrence by half lines and whole lines, or even a few lines together, to the poetic Past. We will do anything but agree with Mr. Hallam, who, in his excellent and learned work on the Literature of Europe, has passed some singular judgments upon the poets, and none more startling than his comparison of Waller to Milton, on the ground of the sustenance of power. The crying truth is louder than Mr. Hallam, and cries, in spite of fame, with whom poor Waller was an *enfant trouvé*, an heir by chance, rather than merit, — that he is feeble poetically quite as surely as morally and politically, and that, so far from being an equal and sustained poet, he has not strength for unity even in his images, nor for continuity in his thoughts, nor for adequacy in his expression, nor for harmony in his versification. This is at least our strong and sustained impression of Edmund Waller.

With a less natural gift of poetry than Waller, Denham has not only more strength of purpose and language (an easy superiority), but some strength in the abstract : he puts forth rather a sinewy hand to the new structure of English versification. It is true, indeed, that in his only poem which survives to any competent popularity — his "Cooper's Hill" — we may find him again and again, by an instinct to a better prin-

ciple, receding to the old habit of the medial pause, instead of the would-be sufficiency of the final one. But, generally, he is true to his modern sect of the Pharisees ; and he helps their prosperity otherwise by adopting that Pharisaic fashion of setting forth, vain-gloriously, a little virtue of thought and poetry in pointed and antithetic expression, which all the wits delighted in, from himself, a chief originator, to Pope, the perfecter. The famous lines, inheriting by entail a thousand critical admirations —

Strong without rage, without o'erflowing full,

and, as Sydney Smith might put it, “a great many other things without a great many other things,” contain the germ and prophecy of the whole Queen Anne’s generation. For the rest, we will be brief in our melancholy, and say no more of Denham than that he was a Dryden *in small*.

The genius of the new school was its anomaly, even Abraham Cowley. We have said nothing of “the metaphysical poets” because we disclaim the classification, and believe with Mr. Leigh Hunt that every poet, inasmuch as he is a poet, is a metaphysician. In taking note, therefore, of this Cowley, who stands on the very vibratory soil of the transition, and stretches his faltering and protesting hands on either side to the old and to the new, let no one brand him for “metaphysics.” He was a true poet, both by natural constitution and cultivation, but without the poet’s heart. His admirers have compared him to Pindar ; and, taking Pindar out of his rapture, they may do so still : he was a Pindar writing by *métier* rather than by *verve*. In rapidity and subtlety of the associative faculty,

which, however, with him, moved circularly rather than onward, he was sufficiently Pindaric : but, as it is a fault in the Greek lyrist to leave his buoyancy to the tumultuous rush of his associations too unmisgivingly and entirely for the right reverence of Unity in Beauty, — so is it the crime of the English poet to commit coldly what the other permitted passively ; and, with a conscious volition, quick yet calm, calm when quickest, to command from the ends of the universe the associations of material sciences and spiritual philosophies. Quickness of the associative or suggestive faculty is common, we have had occasion to observe, to the wit (in the modern sense) and the poet ; its application only being of a reverse difference. Cowley confounded the application, and became a witty poet. The Elizabethan writers were inclined to a too curious illuminating of thought by imagery. Cowley was coarsely curious : he went to the shambles for his chambers of imagery, and very often through the mud. All which faults appear to us attributable to his coldness of temperament, and his defectiveness in the instinct towards Beauty ; to having the intellect only of a great poet, not the sensibility. His *Dauides*," our first epic in point of time, has fine things in it. His translations, or rather paraphrases, of Anacreon are absolutely the most perfect of any English composition of their order. His other poems contain profuse material, in image and reflection, for the accomplishment of three poets, each greater than himself. He approached the beautiful and the true as closely as mere Fancy could ; but that very same Fancy, unfixed by feeling, too often, in the next breath, approximated him to the hideous and the false. Noble thoughts are in Cowley — we say

noble, and we might say sublime ; but, while we speak, he falls below the first praise. Yet his influence was for good rather than for evil, by inciting to a struggle backward, a delay in the revolutionary movement : and this although a wide gulf yawned between him and the former age, and his heart's impulse was not strong enough to cast him across it. For his actual influence, he lifts us up and casts us down — charms, and goes nigh to disgust us — does all but make us love and weep.

And then came “glorious John,” with the whole fourth era in his arms ; — and eloquent above the sons of men, to talk down, thunder down poetry as if it were an exhalation. Do we speak as if he were not a poet ? nay, but we speak of the character of his influences ; nay, but he was a poet — an excellent poet — in marble : and Phidias, with the sculpturesque ideal separated from his working tool, might have carved him. He was a poet without passion, just as Cowley was : but, then, Cowley lived by fancy, and that would have been poor living for John Dryden. Unlike Cowley, too, he had an earnestness which of itself was influential. He was inspired in his understanding and his senses only ; but to the point of disenchanting the world most marvellously. He had a large soul for a man, containing sundry Queen Anne's men, one within another, like quartetto tables ; but it was not a large soul for a poet, and it entertained the universe by potato-patches. He established finally the reign of the literati for the reign of the poets — and the critics clapped their hands. He established finally the despotism of the final emphasis — and no one dared, in affecting criticism, to speak any more at all against a tinkling cymbal. And so, in distinctive succession to poetry

and inspiration, began the new system of harmony "as by law established;" and so he translated Virgil not only into English but into Dryden; and so he was kind enough to translate Chaucer too, as an example, — made him a much finer speaker, and not, according to our doxy, so good a versifier — and cured the readers of the old "Knight's Tale" of sundry of their tears; and so he reasoned powerfully in verse — and threw into verse, besides, the whole force of his strong sensual being; and so he wrote what has been called from generation to generation, down to the threshold of our days, "the best ode in the English language." To complete which successes, he thrust out nature with a fork; and for a long time, and in spite of Horace's prophecy, she never came back again. Do we deny our gratitude and his glory to glorious John because we speak thus? In nowise would we do it. He was a man greatly endowed; and our language and our literature remain, in certain respects, the greater for his greatness — more practical, more rapid, and with an air of mixed freedom and adroitness which we welcome as an addition to the various powers of either. With regard to his influence — and he was most influential upon POETRY — we have spoken; and have the whole of the opening era from which to prove.

While we return upon our steps for a breathing moment, and pause before Milton, — the consideration occurs to us that a person of historical ignorance in respect to this divine poet would hesitate and be at a loss to which era of our poetry to attach him through the internal evidence of his works. He has not the tread of a contemporary of Dryden; and Rochester's nothingness is a strange accompaniment to the voice of

his greatness. Neither can it be quite predicated of him that he walks an Elizabethan man ; there is a certain fine bloom or *farina*, rather felt than seen, upon the old poems, unrecognised upon his. But the love of his genius leant backward to those olden oracles ; and it is pleasant to think that he was actually born before Shakespeare's death ; that they too looked upwardly to the same daylight and stars ; and that he might have stretched his baby arms (" *animosus infans* ") to the faint hazel eyes of the poet of poets. Let us think in anywise that he drew in some living subtle Shakespearian benediction, providing for greatness.

The Italian poets had "rained influence" on the Elizabethan "field of the cloth of gold ;" and from the Italian poets, as well as the classical sources and the elder English ones, did Milton accomplish his soul. Yet the poet Milton was not made by what he received ; not even by what he loved. High above the current of poetical influences he held his own grand personality ; and there never lived poet in any age (unless we assume ignorantly of Homer) more isolated in the contemporaneous world than he. He was not worked upon from out of it, nor did he work outwardly upon it. As Cromwell's secretary and Salmasius's antagonist, he had indeed an audience ; but as a poet, a scant one ; his music, like the spherical tune, being inaudible because too fine and high. It is almost awful to think of him issuing from the arena of controversy victorious and *blind*, — putting away from his dark brows the bloody laurel, left alone after the heat of the day by those for whom he had combated ; and originating in that enforced dark quietude his epic vision for the inward sight of the

unborn ; so to avenge himself on the world's neglect by exacting from it an eternal future of reminiscence. The circumstances of the production of his great work are worthy in majesty of the poem itself ; and the writer is the ideal to us of the majestic personality of a poet. He is the student, the deep thinker, the patriot, the believer, the thorough brave man, — breathing freely for truth and freedom under the leaden weights of his adversities, never reproaching God for his griefs by his despair, working in the chain, praying without ceasing in the serenity of his sightless eyes ; and, because the whole visible universe was swept away from betwixt them and the Creator, contemplating more intently the invisible infinite, and shaping all his thoughts to it in grander proportion. O noble Christian poet ! Which is hardest ? self-renunciation, and the sack-cloth and the cave — or grief-renunciation, and the working on, on, under the stripe ? He did what was hardest. He was Agonistes building up, instead of pulling down ; and his high religious fortitude gave a character to his works. He stood in the midst of those whom we are forced to consider the corrupt versificators of his day, an iconoclast of their idol rhyme, and protesting practically against the sequestration of pauses. His lyrical poems, move they ever so softly, step loftily, and with somewhat of an epic air. His sonnets are the first sonnets of a free rhythm — and this although Shakespeare and Spenser were sonneteers. His “Comus,” and “Samson,” and “Lycidas,” — how are we to praise them ? His epic is the second to Homer's, and the first in sublime effects — a sense as of divine benediction flowing through it from end to end. Not that we compare, for a moment, Mil-

ton's genius with Homer's ; but that Christianity is in the poem besides Milton. If we hazard a remark which is not admiration, it shall be this — that with all his heights and breadths (which we may measure geometrically if we please from the “Davideis” of Cowley) — with all his rapt devotions and exaltations towards the highest of all, we do miss something (we, at least, who are writing, miss something) of what may be called, but rather metaphysically than theologically, *spirituality*. His spiritual personages are vast enough, but not rarefied enough. They are humanities, enlarged, uplifted, transfigured — but no more. In the most spiritual of his spirits there is a conscious, obvious, even ponderous materialism. And hence comes the celestial gunpowder, and hence the clashing with swords, and hence the more continuous evil which we feel better than we describe, the thick atmosphere clouding the heights of the subject. And if anybody should retort, that complaining so we complain of Milton's humanity — we shake our heads. For Shakespeare also was a *man* ; and our creed is, that the “Midsummer Night's Dream” displays more of the fairyhood of fairies than the “Paradise Lost” does of the angelhood of angels. The example may serve the purpose of explaining our objection ; both leaving us room for the one remark more — that Ben Jonson and John Milton, the most scholastic of our poets, brought out of their scholarship different gifts to our language : that Jonson brought more Greek, and Milton more Latin ; while the influences of the latter and greater poet were at once more slowly and more extensively effectual.

Butler was the contemporary of Milton : we confess a sort of continuous “innocent surprise” in the

thought of it, however the craziness of our imagination may be in fault. We have stood by as witnesses while the great poet sanctified the visible earth with the oracle of his blindness; and are startled that a profane voice should be hardy enough to break the echo, and jest in the new consecrated temple. But this is rather a roundheaded than a longheaded way of adverting to poor Butler; who, for all his gross injustice to the purer religionists, in the course of "flattering the vices and daubing the iniquities" of King Charles's court, does scarcely deserve at our hands either to be treated as a poet or punished for being a contemporary of the poet Milton. Butler's business was the business of desecration, the exact reverse of a poet's; and by the admission of all the world his business is well done. His learning is various and extensive, and his fancy communicates to it its mobility. His wit has a gesture of authority, as if it might, if it pleased, be wisdom. His power over language, "tattered and ragged" like Skelton's, is as wonderful as his power over images. And if nobody can commend the design of his "Hudibras," which is the English counterpart of "Don Quixote," — a more objectionable servility than an adaptation from a serious composition, in which case that humorous effect would have been increased by the travesty, which is actually injured, and precisely in an inverse ratio, by the burlesque copy of the burlesque, — everybody must admit the force of the execution. When Prior attempted afterwards the same line of composition with his peculiar grace and airiness of diction, — when Swift ground society into jests with a rougher turning of the wheel, — still, then and since, has this Butler stood alone. He is the genius of his class; a

natural enemy to poetry under the form of a poet : not a great man, but a powerful man.

We return to the generation of Dryden and to Pope his inheritor — Pope, the perfecter, as we have already taken occasion to call him — who stood in the presence of his father Dryden, before that energetic soul, weary with its long literary work which was not always clean and noble, had uttered its last wisdom or foolishness through the organs of the body. Unfortunately, Pope had his advisers apart from his muses ; and their counsel was “be correct.” To be correct, therefore, to be great through correctness, was the end of his ambition, an inspiration scarcely more calculated for the production of noble poems than the philosophy of utilitarianism is for that of lofty virtues. Yet correctness seemed a virtue rare in the land ; Dr. Johnson having crowned Lord Roscommon over Shakespeare’s head, “the only correct writer before Addison.” The same critic predicated of Milton, that he could not cut figures upon cherry-stones. Pope glorified correctness, and dedicated himself to cherry-stones from first to last. A cherry-stone was the apple of his eye.

Now we are not about to take up any popular cry against Pope ; he has been over-praised and is under-praised ; and, in the silence of our poetical experience, ourselves may confess personally to the guiltiness of either extremity. He was not a great poet ; he meant to be a correct poet, and he was what he meant to be, according to his construction of the thing meant : there are few amongst us who fulfil so literally their ambitions. Moreover we will admit to our reader in the confessional, that, however convinced in our innermost opinion of the superiority of Dryden’s

genius, we have more pleasure in reading Pope than we ever could enjoy or imagine under Pope's master. We incline to believe that Dryden being the greatest poet-power, Pope is the best poet-manual ; and that whatever Dryden has done — we do not say conceived, we do not say suggested, but *done* — Pope has done that thing better. For translations, we hold up Pope's Homer against Dryden's Virgil and the world. Both translations are utterly and equally contrary to the antique, both bad with the same sort of excellence; but Pope's faults are Dryden's faults, while Dryden's are not Pope's. We say the like of the poems from Chaucer ; we say the like of the philosophic and satirical poems ; the art of reasoning in verse is admirably attained by either poet, but practised with more grace and point by the later one. To be sure, there is the "Alexander's Feast" ode, called, until people half believed what they said, the greatest ode in the language ! But here is, to make the scales even again, the "Eloisa," with tears on it — faulty but tender — of a sensibility which glorious John was not born with a heart for. To be sure, it was not necessary that John Dryden should keep a Bolingbroke to think for him : but to be sure again, it is something to be born with a heart, particularly for a poet. We recognise besides, in Pope, a delicate fineness of tact, of which the precise contrary is unpleasantly obvious in his great master : Horace Walpole's description of Selwyn, *une bête inspirée*, with a restriction of *bête* to the animal sense, fitting glorious John like his crown. Now there is nothing of this coarseness of the senses about Pope ; the little pale Queen Anne's valetudinarian had a nature fine enough to stand erect upon the point of a needle like a school-

man's angel; and whatever he wrote coarsely, he did not write from inward impulse, but from external conventionality, from a bad social Swift-sympathy. For the rest, he carries out his master's principles into most excellent and delicate perfection: he is rich in his degree. And there is, indeed, something charming even to an enemy's ear in this exquisite balancing of sounds and phrases, these "shining rows" of oppositions and appositions, this glorifying of common-places by antithetic processes, this catching, in the rebound, of emphasis upon rhyme and rhyme; all, in short, of this Indian jugglery and Indian carving upon — cherry-stones! "and she herself" (that is, poetry) —

And she herself one fair Antithesis.

When Voltaire threw his "Henriade" into the fire and Hénault rescued it, "Souvenez-vous," said the president to the poet, "that I burnt my lace ruffles for the sake of your epic." It was about as much as the epic was worth. For our own part, we would sacrifice not only our point, but the prosperity of our very fingers, to save from a similar catastrophe these works of Pope; and this, although the most perfect and original of all of them, "The Rape of the Lock," had its fortune in a fire-safe. They are the works of a master. A great poet? Oh no! A true poet? — perhaps not. Yet a man, be it remembered, of such mixed gracefulness and power, that Lady Mary Wortley deigned to coquet with him, and Dennis shook before him in his shoes.

Nature, as we have observed, had been expelled by a fork, under the hand of Pope's progenitors; and

if in him and around him we see no sign of her return, we do not blame Pope for what is, both in spirit and in form, the sin of his school. Still less would we "play at bowles" with Byron, and praise his right use of the right poetry of Art. Our views of Nature and of Art have been sufficiently explained to leave our opinion obvious of the controversy in question, in which, as in a domestic broil, "there were faults on both sides." Let a poet never write the words "tree," "hill," "river," and he may still be true to nature. Most untrue, on the other hand, most narrow, is the poetical sectarianism, and essentially most unpoetical, which stands among the woods and fields announcing with didactic phlegm, "Here only is Nature." Nature is where God is. Poetry is where God is. Can you go up or down or around, and not find Him? In the loudest hum of your machinery, in the dunnest volume of your steam, in the foulest street of your city, — there, as surely as in the Brocken pine-woods, and the watery thunders of Niagara, — there, as surely as He is above all, lie Nature and Poetry in full life. Speak, and they will answer? Nature is a large meaning: let us make room for it in the comprehension of our love! — for the coral rock built up by the insect and the marble column erected by the man.

In this age of England, however, pet-named the Augustan, there was no room either for Nature or Art: Art and Nature (for we will not separate their names) were at least maimed and dejected and sickening day by day —

Quoth she, I grieve to see your leg
Stuck in a hole here, like a peg;

and even so, or like the peg of a top humming drowsily, our poetry stood still. There was an abundance of "correct writers," yes, and of "elegant writers": there was Parnell, for instance, who would be called besides a pleasing writer by any pleasing critic; and Addison, a proverb for the "virtuousest, discreetest, best" with all the world. Or if, after the Scotch mode of Monkbarns, we call our poets by their possessions, not so wronging their characteristics, there was "The Dispensary," the "Art of Preserving Health," the "Art of Cookery," — and "Trivia," or the "Fan," — take Gay by either of those names! and "Cider," or the "Splendid Shilling" — take Phillips, Milton's imitator, by either of these! and there was Pomfret, not our "choice," the concentrate essence of namby-pambyism; and Prior, a brother spirit of the French Grasset, — a half-brother, of an inferior race, yet to be praised by us for one instinct obvious in him, a blind stretching of the hand to a sweeter order of versification than was current. Of Young we could write much; he was the very genius of antithesis; a genius breaking from "the system," with its broken chain upon his limbs, and frowning darkly through the grey monotony; a grander writer by spasms than by volitions. Blair was of his class, but rougher; a brawny contemplative Orson. And how many of our readers may be unaware of the underground existence of another *Excursion* than the deathless one of our days, and in blank verse, too, and in several cantos; and how nobody will thank us for digging at these fossil remains! It is better to remember Mallet by his touching ballad of the "William and Margaret," a word taken from diviner lips to becoming

purpose ; only we must not be thrown back upon the "Ballads," lest we wish to live with them for ever. Our literature is rich in ballads, a form epitomical of the epic and dramatic, and often vocal when no other music is astir ; and to give a particular account of which would take us far across our borders.

As it is, we are across them ; we are benighted in our wandering and straitened for room. We glance back vainly to the lights of the later drama, and see Dryden, who had the heart to write rhymed plays after Shakespeare, and but little heart for anything else, — and Congreve, and Lillo, and Southerne, and Rowe, all gifted writers, and Otway, master of tears, who starved in our streets for his last tragedy — a poet most effective in broad touches ; rather moving, as it appears to us, by scenes than by words.

Returning to the general poets, we meet, with bent faces toward hill-side Nature, Thomson and Dyer ; in writing which names together, we do not depreciate Thomson's, however we may a little exalt Dyer's. We praise neither of these writers for being descriptive poets ; but for that faithful transcript of their own impressions, which is a common subject of praise in both : Dyer being more distinct, perhaps, in his images, and Thomson more impressive in his general effect. Both are faulty in their blank verse diction ; the latter too florid and verbose, the former (although "Grongar Hill" is simple almost to baldness) too pedantic and *constructive* — far too "saponaceous" and "pomaceous." We offer pastoral salutation also to Shenstone and Hammond ; pairing them like Polyphemus's sheep ; fain to be courteous if we could : and we could if we were "Phyllida." Surely it is an accomplishment to utter a pretty thought so

simply that the world is forced to remember it ; and that gift was Shenstone's, and he the most poetical of country gentlemen. May every shrub on the lawn of Leasowes be ever green to his brow ! And next, oh most patient reader, — pressed to a conclusion and in a pairing humour, we come to Gray and Akenside together, yes, together ! because if Gray had written a philosophic poem he would have written it like the “Pleasures of Imagination,” and because Akenside would have written odes like Gray if he could have commanded a rapture. Gray, studious and sitting in the cold, learnt the secret of a simulated and innocent fire (the Greek fire he might have *called* it), which burns beautifully to the eye, but never would have harmed M. Hénault's ruffles. Collins had twenty times the lyric genius of Gray : we feel his fire in our cheeks. But Gray, like Akenside — both with a volition towards enthusiasm — have an under-constitution of most scholastic coldness : “*Si vis me flere,*” you must weep ; but they only take out their pocket-handkerchiefs. We confess humbly, before gods and men, that we never read to the end of Akenside's “Pleasures,” albeit we have read Plato : some pleasures, say the moralists, are more trying than pains. Let us turn for refreshment to Goldsmith — that amiable genius, upon whose diadem we feel our hands laid ever and anon in familiar love, — to Goldsmith, half emerged from “the system,” his forehead touched with the red ray of the morning ; a cordial singer. Even Johnson, the ponderous critic of the system, who would hang a dog if he read “*Lycidas*” twice, who wrote the lives of the poets and left out the poets, even he loved Goldsmith ! and Johnson was Dryden's critical bear — a rough bear, and with points of noble

beardom. But while he growled the leaves of the greenwood fell ; and oh, how sick to faintness grew the poetry of England ! Anna Seward "by'r lady," was the "muse" of those days, and Mr. Hayley "the bard," and Hannah More wrote our dramas, and Helen Williams our odes, and Rosa Matilda our elegiacs, — and Blacklock, blind from his birth, our descriptive poems, and Mr. Whalley our "domestic epics," and Darwin our poetical philosophy, and Lady Millar encouraged literature at Bath, with red taffeta and "the vase." But the immortal are threatened vainly. It was the sickness of renewal rather than of death ; St. Leon had his fainting hand on the elixir : the new era was alive in Cowper. We do not speak of him as the master of a transition, only as a hinge on which it slowly turned ; only as an earnest, tender writer, and true poet enough to be true to himself. Cowper sang in England, and Thomas Warton also, — of a weaker voice but in tune : and Beattie, for whom we have too much love to analyse it, seeing that we drew our childhood's first poetic pleasure from his "Minstrel." And Burns walked in glory on the Scottish mountain's side ; and everywhere Dr. Percy's collected ballads were sowing the great hearts of some still living for praise with impulses of greatness. It was the revival of poetry, the opening of the fifth era, the putting down of the Dryden dynasty, the breaking of the serf bondage, the wrenching of the iron from the soul. And Nature and Poetry did embrace one another ! and all men who were lovers of either and of our beloved England were enabled to resume the pride of their consciousness, and looking round the world say gently, yet gladly, "Our Poets."

When Mr. Wordsworth gave his first poems to the

public, it was not well with poetry in England. The "system" riveted upon the motions of poetry by Dryden and his dynasty had gradually added to the restraint of slavery its weakness and emasculation. The change from poetry to rhetoric had issued in another change, to the commonplaces of rhetoric. We had no longer to complain of Pope's antithetic glories : there was "a vile antithesis" for those also. The followers were not as the master ; and the very facility with which the trick of acoustical mechanics was caught up by the former—admitted of "singing for the million," with ten fingers each for natural endowment, and the ability to count them for requirement,—made wider and more apparent the difference of dignity between the Popes and the Pope Joans. Little by little, by slow and desolate degrees, Thought had perished out of the way of the appointed and most beaten rhythm ; and we had the beaten rhythm, without the living footstep—we had the monotony of the military movement, without the heroic impulse—the cross of the Legion of Honour, hung, as it once was, in a paroxysm of converted Bourbonism, at a horse's tail ; and the "fork," which expelled Nature, dropped feebly downward, blunted of its point. And oh ! to see who sat then in England in the seats of the elders ! The Elizabethan men would have gnashed their teeth at such a sight : the Queen Anne's men would have multiplied Dunciads. Of the third George's men (*'Αχαιίδες οὐκ ἐστ' Ἀχαιοί*), Hayley, too good a scholar to bear to be so bad a poet, was a chief hope ; and Darwin, mistaker of the optic nerve for the poetical sense, an inventive genius.

But Cowper had a great name, and Burns a greater ; and the *réveille* of Dr. Percy's "Reliques

of English Poetry" was echoed presently by the "Scottish Minstrelsy." There was a change, a revival, an awakening, a turning, at least upon the pillow, of some who slept on in mediocrity, as if they felt the daylight on their shut eyelids : there was even a group of noble hearts (Coleridge, the idealist, poet among poets, in their midst), foreseeing the sun. Nature, the long banished, re-dawned like the morning : Nature, the true mother, cried afar off to her children, " Children, I am here ! come to me." It was a hard act to come, and involved the learning and the leaving of much. Conventionalities of phrase and rhythm, conventional dialects set apart for poets, conventional words, attitudes, and manners, consecrated by " wits," — all such Nessian trappings were to be wrenched off, even to the cuticle into which they had urged their poison. But it was an act not too hard for the doing. There was a visible movement towards Nature ; the majority moving of course with reservation, but individuals with decision ; some rending downward their garments of pestilent embroidery, and casting themselves at her feet. As the chief of the movement, the Xenophon of the return, we are bound to acknowledge this great Wordsworth, and to admire how, in a bravery bravest of all because born of love, in a passionate unreservedness sprung of genius, and to the actual scandal of the world which stared at the filial familiarity, he threw himself not at the feet of Nature, but straightway and right tenderly upon her bosom. And so, trustfully as child before mother, self-renouncingly as child after sin, absorbed away from the consideration of publics and critics as child at playhours, with a simplicity startling to the *blasé* critical ear as inventiveness, with an innocent

utterance felt by the competent thinker to be wisdom, and with a faithfulness to natural impressions acknowledged since by all to be the highest art, — this William Wordsworth did sing his “Lyrical Ballads” where the “Art of criticism” had been sung before, and “the world would not let them die.”

The voice of nature has a sweetness which few of us, when sufficiently tried, can gainsay ; it penetrates our artificial “tastes,” and overcomes us ; and our ignorance seldom proves strong in proportion to our instincts. We recognise, like Ulysses’ dog, with feeble joyous gesture the master’s voice : and the sound is nearly always pleasant to us, however we may want strength to follow after it. But while, at the period we refer to, the recognition and gratulation were true and deep, the old conventionalities and prejudices hung heavily in bondage and repression. The great body of readers would recoil to the Drydenic rhythm, to the Queen Anne’s poetical cant, to anti-Saxonisms whether in Latin or French ; or exacted, as a condition of a poet’s faithfulness to nature, such an effervescence of his emotions as had rendered Pope natural in the “Eloisa.” “Let us all forsooth be Eloisa, and so natural,” — the want was an excuse for loving nature ; and the opinion went that the daily heartbeat was more obnoxious in poetry than the incidental palpitation. Poor Byron (true miserable genius, soul-blind great poet!) ministered to this singular need, identifying poetry and passion. Poetry ought to be the revelation of the complete man — and Byron’s manhood having no completion nor entirety, consisting on the contrary of a one-sided passionate-ness, his poems discovered not a heart, but the wound of a heart ; not humanity, but disease ; not life, but a

crisis. It was not so — it was not in the projection of a passionate emotion — that William Wordsworth committed himself to nature, but in full resolution and determinate purpose. He is scarcely, perhaps, of a passionate temperament, although still less is he cold ; rather quiet in his love, as the stockdove, and brooding over it as constantly, and with as soft an inward song lapsing outwardly — serene through deepness — saying himself of his thoughts, that they “do often lie too deep for tears ;” which does not mean that their painfulness will not suffer them to be wept for, but that their closeness to the supreme Truth hallows them, like the cheek of an archangel, from tears. Call him the very opposite of Byron, who, with narrower sympathies for the crowd, yet stood nearer to the crowd, because everybody understands passion. Byron was a poet through pain. Wordsworth is a feeling man because he is a thoughtful man ; he knows grief itself by a reflex emotion ; by sympathy rather than by suffering. He is eminently and humanly expansive ; and, spreading his infinite egotism over all the objects of his contemplation, reiterates the love, life, and poetry of his peculiar being in transcribing and chanting the material universe, and so sinks a broad gulf between his descriptive poetry and that of the Darwinian painter-poet school. Darwin was, as we have intimated, all optic nerve. Wordsworth’s eye is his soul. He does not see that which he does not intellectually discern, and he beholds his own cloud-capped Helvellyn under the same conditions with which he would contemplate a grand spiritual abstraction. In his view of the exterior world, — as in a human Spinozism, — mountains and men’s hearts share in a sublime unity of humanity ; yet his Spinoz-

ism does in nowise affront God, for he is eminently a religious poet, if not, indeed, altogether as generous and capacious in his Christianity as in his poetry; and, being a true Christian poet, he is scarcely least so when he is not writing directly upon the subject of religion; just as we learn sometimes without looking up, and by the mere colour of the grass, that the sky is cloudless. But what is most remarkable in this great writer is his poetical consistency. There is a wonderful unity in these multifarious poems of one man: they are "bound each to each in natural piety," even as his days are: and why? because they *are* his days — all his days, work days and Sabbath days — his life, in fact, and not the unconnected works of his life, as vulgar men do opine of poetry and do rightly opine of vulgar poems, but the sign, seal, and representation of his life — nay, the actual audible breathing of his inward spirit's life. When Milton said that a poet's life should be a poem, he spoke a high moral truth; if he had added a reversion of the saying, that a poet's poetry should be his life, — he would have spoken a critical truth, not low.

"Foole, saide my muse to mee, looke in thine heart and write," — and not only, we must repeat, at feast times, fast times, or curfew times — not only at times of crisis and emotion, but at all hours of the clock; for that which God thought good enough to write, or permit the writing of, on His book, the heart, is not too common, let us be sure, to write again in the best of our poems. William Wordsworth wrote these common things of nature, and by no means in a phraseology nor in a style. He was daring in his commonness as any of your Tamerlanes may be daring when far fetching an alien image from

an outermost world ; and, notwithstanding the ribald cry of that " vox populi " which has, in the criticism of poems, so little the character of divinity, and which loudly and mockingly, at his first utterance, denied the sanctity of his simplicities, — the Nature he was faithful to " betrayed not the heart which loved her," but, finally, justifying herself and him, " DID " — without the " Edinburgh Review."

" Hero-worshippers " as we are, and sitting for all the critical pretence — in right or wrong of which we speak at all — at the feet of Mr. Wordsworth, — recognising him, as we do, as poet-hero of a movement essential to the better being of poetry, as poet-prophet of utterances greater than those who first listened could comprehend, and of influences most vital and expansive — we are yet honest to confess that certain things in the " Lyrical Ballads " which most provoked the ignorant innocent hootings of the mob, do not seem to us all heroic. Love, like ambition, may overvault itself ; and Betty Foys of the Lake school (so called) may be as subject to conventionalities as Pope's Lady Bettys. And, perhaps, our great poet might, through the very vehemence and nobleness of his hero and prophet-work for nature, confound, for some blind moment, and by an association easily traced and excused, nature with rusticity, the simple with the bald ; and even fall into a vulgar conventionality in the act of spurning a graceful one. If a trace of such confounding may occasionally be perceived in Mr. Wordsworth's earlier poetry, few critics are mad enough, to-day, to catch at the loose straws of the full golden sheaf and deck out withal their own arrogant fronts in the course of mouthing mocks at the poet. The veriest critic of straw knoweth well at this

hour of the day, that if Mr. Wordsworth was ever over-rustic, it was not through incapacity to be right royal ; that of all poets, indeed, who have been kings in England, not one has swept the purple with more majesty than this poet, when it hath pleased him to be majestic. *Vivat rex*, — and here is a new volume of his reign. Let us rejoice, for the sake of literature and the age, in the popularity which is ready for it, and in the singular happiness of a great poet living long enough to rebound from the “fell swoop” of his poetical destiny, survive the ignorance of his public, and convict the prejudices of his reviewers. It is a literal “poetical justice,” and one rarest of all, that a great poet should stand in a permitted sovereignty, without doing so, like poor Inez de Castro, by right of death. It is almost wonderful that his country should clap her hands in praise of him, before he has ceased to hear : the applause resembles an anachronism. Is Mr. Wordsworth startled at receiving from his contemporaries what he expected only from posterity ? — is he asking himself “Have I done anything wrong ?” Probably not : it is at least with his usual air of calm and advised dignity that he addresses his new volume in its *Envoy* —

Go single, — yet aspiring to be joined
 With thy forerunners, that through many a year
 Have faithfully prepared each other's way —
 Go forth upon a mission best fulfilled
 When and wherever, in this changeful world,
Power hath been given to please for higher ends
Than pleasure only ; gladdening to prepare
 For wholesome sadness, troubling to refine,
 Calming to raise.

— words of the poet which form a nobler description of the character and uses of his poetry than could be given in any words of a critic.

We do not say that the finest of Mr. Wordsworth's productions are to be found, or should be looked for, in the present volume ; but the volume is worthy of its forerunners, consistent in noble earnestness and serene philosophy, true poet's work, — the hand trembling not a jot for years or weariness, — the full face of the soul turned hopefully and stilly as ever towards the True, and catching across its ridge the idealised sunlight of the Beautiful. And yet if we were recording angel, instead of only recording reviewer, we should drop a tear — another — and end by weeping out that series of sonnets in favour of capital punishments, — moved that a hand which has traced *life-warrants* so long for the literature of England should thus sign a mis-placed “Benedicite” over the hangman and his victim. We turn away from them to other sonnets — to forget aught in Mr. Wordsworth's poetry we must turn to his poetry : — and however the greatest poets of our country, — the Shakespeares, Spensers, Miltons, — worked upon high sonnet-ground, not one opened over it such broad and pouring sluices of various thought, imagery, and emphatic eloquence as he has done.

The tender Palinodia is beyond Petrarch : —

Though I beheld at first with blank surprise
This work, I now have gazed on it so long,
I see its truth with reluctant eyes ;
O, my beloved ! I have done thee wrong,
Conscious of blessedness, but, whence it springs
Ever too heedless, as I now perceive :
Morn into noon did pass, noon into eve,

And the old day was welcome, as the young,
As welcome and as beautiful — in sooth
More beautiful, as being a thing more holy ;
Thanks to thy virtues, to the eternal youth
Of all thy goodness, never melancholy ;
To thy large heart and humble mind, that cast
Into one vision, future, present, past !

That "*more beautiful*" is most beautiful : all human love's cunning is in it, besides the full glorifying smile of Christian love.

Last in the volume is the tragedy of "The Borderers," which, having lain for some fifty years "unregarded" among its author's papers, — a singular destiny for these printing days when our very morning-talk seems to fall naturally into pica type, — caused, in its announcement from afar, the most faithful disciples to tremble for the possible failure of their master. Perhaps they trembled with cause. The master, indeed, was a prophet of humanity ; but he was wiser in love than terror, in admiration than pity, and rather intensely than actively human ; capacious to embrace within himself the whole nature of things and beings, but not going out of himself to embrace anything ; a poet of one large sufficient soul, but not polypsychical like a dramatist. Therefore his disciples trembled : and we will not say that the tragedy, taken as a whole, does not justify the fear. There is something grand and Greek in the intention which hinges it, showing how crime makes crime in cursed generation, and how black hearts, like whiter ones (Topaze or Ebène), do cry out and struggle for sympathy and brotherhood ; granting that light heart (Oswald) may stand something too much on the extreme of evil to represent humanity broadly enough

for a drama to turn upon. The action, too, although it does not, as might have been apprehended, lose itself in contemplation, has no unhesitating firm dramatic march — perhaps it “potters” a little, to take a word from Mrs. Butler; — and when all is done we look vainly within us for an impression, the response to the unity of the whole. But, again, when all is done, the work is Mr. Wordsworth’s, and the conceptions and utterances living and voiceful in it bear no rare witness to the master. The old blind man, left to the ordeal of the desert — the daughter in agony hanging upon the murderer for consolation — knock against the heart, and take back answers; and ever and anon there are sweet gushings of such words as this poet only knows, showing how, in a “late remorse of love,” he relapses into pastoral dreams, notwithstanding his new vocation, and within the very sight of the theatric *tbymele*: —

A grove of darker and more lofty shade
I never saw. The music of the birds
Drops deadened from a roof so thick with leaves.

Who can overpass the image of the old innocent
man praying? —

The name of daughter on his lips, he prays!
With nerves so steady, that the very flies
Sit unmolested on his staff.

But we come hastily to the moral of our story, — seeing that Mr. Wordsworth’s life does present a high moral to his generation, to forget which in his poetry would be an unworthy compliment to the latter. It is

advantageous for us all, whether poets or poetasters, or talkers about either, to know what a true poet is, what his work is, and what his patience and successes must be, so as to raise the popular idea of these things, and either strengthen or put down the individual aspiration. "Art," it was said long ago, "requires the whole man," and "Nobody," it was said later, "can be a poet who is anything else;" but the present idea of Art requires the segment of a man, and everybody who is anything at all is a poet in a parenthesis. And our shelves groan with little books over which their readers groan less metaphorically; there is a plague of poems in the land apart from poetry; and many poets who live and are true do not live by their truth, but hold back their full strength from Art because they do not *revere* it fully; and all booksellers cry aloud and do not spare, that poetry will not sell; and certain critics utter melancholy frenzies, that poetry is worn out for ever — as if the morning-star was worn out from heaven, or "the yellow primrose" from the grass; and Mr. Disraeli the younger, like Bildad comforting Job, suggests that we may content ourselves for the future with a rhythmic prose, printed like prose for decency, and supplied, for comfort, with a parish allowance of two or three rhymes to a paragraph. Should there be any whom such a "New Poor Law" would content, we are far from wishing to disturb the virtue of their serenity: let them continue, like the hypochondriac, to be very sure that they have lost their souls, inclusive of their poetic instincts. In the meantime the hopeful and believing will hope, — trust on; and, better still, the Tennysons and the Brownings, and other high-gifted spirits, will work, wait on, until, as Mr. Horne has said —

Strong deeds awake
And, clamouring, throng the portals of the hour.

It is well for them and all to count the cost of this life of a master in poetry, and learn from it what a true poet's crown is worth ; to recall both the long life's work for its sake — the work of observation, of meditation, of reaching past models into nature, of reaching past nature unto God ; and the early life's loss for its sake — the loss of the popular cheer, of the critical assent, and of the " money in the purse." It is well and full of exultation to remember *now* what a silent, blameless, heroic life of poetic duty this man has lived, — how he never cried rudely against the world because he was excluded for a time from the parsley garlands of its popularity ; nor sinned morally because he was sinned against intellectually ; nor, being tempted and threatened by paymaster and reviewer, swerved from the righteousness and high aims of his inexorable genius. And it cannot be ill to conclude by enforcing a high example by some noble precepts which, taken from the " Musophilus " of old Daniel, do contain, to our mind, the very code of chivalry for poets : —

Be it that my unseasonable song
Come out of Time, that fault is in the Time ;
And I must not do virtue so much wrong
As love her aught the worse for others' crime.

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And for my part, if only one allow
The care my labouring spirits take in this,
He is to me a theatre large enow,
And his applause only sufficient is —

All my respect is bent but to his brow :
 That is my all, and all I am is his :
 And if some worthy spirits be pleased too,
 It shall more comfort breed, but not more will.
 BUT WHAT IF NONE? *It cannot yet undo*
The love I bear unto this holy skill :
This is the thing that I was born to do,
This is my scene, this part must I fulfil.

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES.

I. CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARD AN ESSAY ON CARLYLE.

1843.

ACCORDING to the view of the *microcosmus*, what is said of the world itself, may be said of every individual in it; and what is said of the individual, may be predicated of the world. Now, the individual mind has been compared to a prisoner in a dark room, or in a room which would be dark but for the windows of the same, meaning the senses in a figure, — nothing being in the mind without the mediation of the senses, as Locke held, — “except” . . . as Leibnitz acutely added in modification, . . . “the mind itself.” Thus is it with the individual, and thus with the general humanity. Except for Revelations, and genius which is a minor species of Revelation, we should sit on the floor of our dark dungeon, between its close stifling walls, gnawing vainly with the teeth of the mind, at the chains we wear. It is well to talk of the progress of the public mind. The public mind, — that is the average intelligence of the many, — never does make progress, except by imitation. Education is imitation, and the most passive of activities. Progress implies the most active of energies, such as genius is, and general progress implies, and indeed essentially consists of, individual progress, men of genius working. A Ulysses must pass with the first goat, — call him Nobody, or by his right name. And to return to our first figure, — what the senses are to

the individual mind, men of genius are to the general mind. Scantly assigned by Providence for necessary ends, one original thinker strikes a window out here, and another there; wielding the mallet sharply, and leaving it to others to fashion grooves and frames, and complete advantage into convenience.

That Mr. Carlyle is one of the men of genius thus referred to, and that he has knocked out his window from the blind wall of his century, we may add without any fear of contradiction. We may say too that it is a window to the east, — and that some men complain of a certain bleakness in the wind which enters at it, when they should rather congratulate themselves and him on the aspect of the new sun beheld through it, — the orient hope of which, he has so discovered to their eyes. And let us take occasion to observe here, and to bear in memory through every subsequent remark we may be called upon to make, — that it has not been his object to discover to us any specific prospect — not the mountain to the right, nor the oak-wood to the left, nor the river which runs down between, — but the sun, which renders visible all these.

When “the most thinking people” had, at the sound of all sorts of steam-engines, sufficiently worshipped that idol of utilitarianism which Jeremy Bentham the king had set up, — the voice of a prophet was heard praying three times a day, with magnanimous reiteration, towards Jerusalem, — towards old Jerusalem, be it observed, — and also towards the place of sun-rising for ultimate generations. And the voice spoke a strange language, — nearly as strange as Bentham’s own, and as susceptible of translation into English. Not English by any means, the critics said

it spake ; nor even German, nor Greek ; although partaking considerably more of the two last than of English, — yet if the critics could not measure it out to you as classic English, after the measure of Swift or Addison, or even of Bacon and Milton, — if new words sprang gauntly in it from savage derivatives, and rushed together in unnatural combinations, — if the collocation was distortion, wandering wildly up and down, — if the consonants were everywhere in a heap, like the “pots and pans” of Bassano, — classic or not, English or not, — it was certainly a true language — a language “*μερόπων ἀνθρώπων*,” — the significant articulation of a living soul : God’s breath was in the vowels of it. And the clashing of these harsh compounds at last drew the bees into assembly, each murmuring his honey-dream. And the hearers who stood longest to listen, became sensible of a still grave music issuing like smoke from the clefts of the rock. If it was not “style” and “classicism,” it was something better ; it was soul-language. There was a divinity at the shaping of these rough-hewn periods.

We dwell the longer upon the construction of Mr. Carlyle’s sentences, because of him it is pre-eminently true, that the speech is the man. All powerful writers will leave, more or less, the pressure of their individuality on the medium of their communication with the public. Even the idiomatic writers, who trust their thoughts to a customary and conventional phraseology, and thus attain to a recognised level perfection in the medium, at the expense of being less instantly incisive and expressive (according to an obvious social analogy), — have each an individual aspect. But the individuality of this writer is strongly pronounced. It is graven, — like a Queen’s arrow

on the poker and tongs of her national prisons, — upon the meanest word of his utterance. He uses no moulds in his modelling, as you may see by the impression of his thumb-nail upon the clay. He throws his truth with so much vehemence, that the print of the palm of his hand is left on it. Let no man scorn the language of Carlyle: for if it forms part of his idiosyncrasy, his idiosyncrasy forms part of his truth. And let no man say that we recommend Carlylisms: for it is obvious, — from our very argument, — that, in the mouth of an imitator, they would unlearn their uses, and be conventional as Addison. We have named Carlyle in connection with Bentham, and we believe that you will find in “your philosophy,” no better antithesis for one, than is the other. There is as much resemblance between them as is necessary for antithetic unlikeness. Each headed a great movement among thinking men; and each made a language for himself to speak with; and neither of them originated what they taught. Bentham’s work was done by systematising; and Carlyle’s, by reviving and reiterating. And as from the beginning of the world, the two great principles of matter and spirit have combated, — whether in man’s personality, between the flesh and the soul, — or in his speculativeness, between the practical and the ideal, — or in his mental expression, between science and poetry, — Bentham and Carlyle assumed the double van on opposite sides — Bentham gave an impulse to the material energies of his age, of the stuff of which he was himself made, — while Carlyle threw himself before the crashing chariots, not in sacrifice, but deprecation; . . . “Go aside — *there is a spirit even in the wheels!*” . . . In brief, and to take up that classification of virtues made by

Proclus and the later Platonists, — Bentham headed such as were πολιτικά, Carlyle exalts that which is τελεστική, venerant and religious virtue.

We have observed that Carlyle is not an originator ; and although he is a man of genius and original mind, and although he has knocked out his window in the wall of his century — and we know it, — we must repeat that, in a strict sense, he is not an originator. Perhaps our figure of the window might have been more correctly stated as the reopening of an old window, long bricked up or encrusted over, — and probably this man of a strong mallet, and sufficient right hand, thought the recovery of the old window, a better and more glorious achievement, than the making of many new windows. His office is certainly not to “exchange new lamps for old ones.” His quality of a “gold-revivor” is the nearest to a novel acquirement. He tells us what we knew, but had forgotten, or disdained to remember ; and his reiterations startle and astonish us like informations. We “have souls,” he tells us. Who doubted it in the nineteenth century ; yet who thought of it in the roar of the steam-engine ? He tells us that work is every man’s duty. Who doubted *that* among the factory masters ? — or among the charity children, when spelling from the catechism of the national church, that they will “do their duty in the state of life to which it shall please God to call them” ? Yet how deep and like a new sound, do the words “soul,” “work,” “duty,” strike down the thoughts of the thinkers of the age, till the whole age vibrates ! And again he tells us, “Have faith.” Why, did we not know that we must have “faith” ? Is there a religious teacher in the land who does not repeat from

God's revelation, year by year, day by day, Have faith? or is there a quack in the land who does not illustrate to our philosophy the energy of "faith"? And again . . . "Truth is a good thing." Is *that* new? Is it not written in the theories of the moralist, and of the child?—yes, and in the moral code of "honourable men," side by side with the "melancholy necessity" of the duellist's pistol and twelve paces? Yet we thrill at the words, as if some new thunder of divine instruction ruffled the starry air,—as if an angel's foot sounded down it, step by step, coming with a message.

Thus it is obvious that Mr. Carlyle is not an originator, but a renewer, although his medium is highly original; and it remains to us to recognise that he is none the less important teacher on that account, and that there was none the less necessity for his teaching. "The great fire-heart," as he calls it, of human nature may burn too long without stirring,—burn inwardly, cake outwardly, and sink deeply into its own ashes: and to emancipate the flame clear and bright, it is necessary to stir it up strongly from the lowest bar. To do this, is the aim and end of all poetry of a high order,—this,—to resume human nature from its beginning, and return to first principles of thought and first elements of feeling; this,—to dissolve from eye and ear the film of habit and convention, and to let Beauty and Truth run gushing upon unencrusted perceptive faculties; for as Religion makes a man a child again innocently,—so should poetry make a man a child again perceptively. This is what a poet [must] try for; and in this aim, Carlyle is, as he has been called, a poet, and a great one—only what the poet does for the individual reader

and the actual instincts, Carlyle would do for society collectively, opening out from the individual despairing-sentimental into the social [word obliterated by Horne]. What the poet does by an emotion, Carlyle would do by a conviction. No poet yearns more earnestly to make the Inner Life shine out, than does Carlyle. No poet regrets more sorrowfully, with a look across the crowded and crushing intellects of the world, — that the dust rising up from men's energies, should have blinded them to the brightness of their instincts, — and that Understanding (according to the German view) should take precedence of Reason, by a spiritual anachronism and incoherence of things. He is reproached with not being practical — Mr. Carlyle is not practical. But he is practical for many intents of the inner life, and teaches well the Doing of Being. "What would he make of us?" say the complainers. "He reproaches us with the necessities of the age — he taunts us with the very progress of time : his requirements are so impossible that they make us despair of the republic." And this is true. If we were to give him a sceptre, and cry, "Rule over us," he would answer: "Ye have souls ! work — believe." He would not know what else to do with us. He would pluck, absently, at the sceptre for the wool of the fillet to which his hands were accustomed ; for he is no king, except in his own peculiar sense of a prophet and priest-king, — and a vague prophet, be it understood. His recurrence to first principles and elements of action, is, in fact, so constant and passionate, that his attention is not free for the devolve-ment of acts. The hand is the gnomon by which he judges of the soul ; and little cares he for the hand

otherwise, — he will not wash your hands for you, be sure, however he may moralise on their blackness. Whether he writes history or philosophy or criticism, his perpetual appeal is to those common elements of Humanity which it is his object to cast into relief and light. His work on the French Revolution is a great poem with this same object, . . . a return upon the life of Humanity, and an eliciting of the pure material and initial element of life, out of the fire and torment of it. The work has fitly been called graphical and picturesque ; but it is so *by force of being* philosophical and poetical. For instance, where the writer says that “Marat was in a cradle like the rest of us,” it is no touch of rhetoric, though it may seem so, but a resumption of the philosophy of the whole work.

From the assimilations in the world, he wrings the product of the differences ; and by that curious individualising of persons, which is remarkable in his historical manner, he attempts a broad generalising of principles. And when he throws his living heart into an old monk’s diary, and, with the full warm gradual throbs of genius and power, throbs out the cowed head into a glory, . . . the reason is not, as disquieted doctors may [word obliterated] hint . . . that Mr. Carlyle regrets the cloistral ages and defunct superstitions, — the reason is not, that Mr. Carlyle is *too* poetical to be philosophical, but that he is *so* poetical as to be philosophical. The reason is, that Mr. Carlyle recognises in a manner that no mere historian ever does, but as the true poet always will do, — the oneness of the God-made man through every cycle of his individual and social existence, — assuming the original nature in it and it in the present identification. He is a poet also, by his insight into

the activity of moral causes working through the intellectual agencies of the mind. He is also a poet in the mode. He conducts his argument with none of your philosophical arrangements and marshalling of "for and against": his paragraphs come and go as they please. He proceeds, like a poet, rather by association than by uses of logic. His illustrations not only illustrate, but bear a part in the reasoning, — the images standing out, like grand and beautiful Caryatides, to sustain the heights of the argument. Of his language we have spoken. Somewhat too slow and involved for eloquence, and too individual to be classical, it is yet the language of a gifted poet, the colour of whose soul eats itself into the words.

It is impossible to part from this subject without touching upon a point of it we have already glanced at by an illustration, when we said that his object was to discover the sun, and not to specify the landscape. He is, in fact, somewhat indefinite in his ideas of "faith" and "truth." In his ardour for the quality of belief, he is apt to separate it from its objects; and although in the remarks on tolerance in his "Hero Worship," he guards himself strongly from an imputation of latitudinarianism, yet we cannot say but that he sometimes overleaps his own fences, and sets us wondering whither he would be speeding. This is the occasion of some disquiet to such of his readers as discern that the *truth itself* is a more excellent thing than our *belief* in the truth; and that, *a priori*, our *belief does not make the truth*. But it is the effect more or less of every abstract consideration that we are inclined to hold the object of abstraction some moments longer in its state of separation and analysis than is at all necessary or desirable. And, after all,

the right way of viewing the matter is that Mr. Carlyle intends to teach us something, and not everything ; and to direct us to a particular instrument, and not to direct us in its specific application. It would be a strange reproach to offer to the morning star, that it does not shine in the evening.

For the rest, we may congratulate Mr. Carlyle and the dawning time. We have observed that individual genius is the means of popular advancement. A man of genius gives a thought to the multitude, and the multitude spread it out as far as it will go, until another man of genius brings another thought, which attaches itself to the first, because all truth is assimilative, and perhaps even reducible to that monadity of which Parmenides discoursed. Mr. Carlyle is gradually amassing a greater reputation than might have been looked for at the hands of this polytechnic age, and has the satisfaction of witnessing with his living eyes the outspread of his thought among nations. That this Thought — the ideas of this prose poet — should make way with sufficient rapidity for him to live to see the progress, is a fact full of hope for the coming age ; even as the other fact, of its first channel furrowing America (and it is a fact that Carlyle was generally read there before he was truly recognised in his own land), is replete with favorable promise for that great country, and indicative of a noble love of truth in it passing the love of dollars.

II. CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARD AN ESSAY
ON TENNYSON.

THE name of Alfred Tennyson is pressing slowly, calmly, but surely, — with certain recognition but no loud shouts of greeting — from the lips of the discerners of poets, of whom there remain a few even in the cast-iron ages, along the lips of the less informed public, “to its own place” in the starry house of names. That it is the name of a true poet, the drowsy public exerts itself to acknowledge; testifying with a heavy lifting of the eyelid, to its consciousness of a new light in one of the nearer sconces. This poet’s public is certainly awake to him, — although you would not think so. And this public’s poet, standing upon the recognition of his own genius, begins to feel the ground firm beneath his feet, — after no worse persecution than is comprised in those charges of affectation, quaintness, and mannerism, which were bleated down the ranks of the innocent “sillie” critics as they went one after another to water. Let the toleration be chronicled to the honour of England. And who knows? — There may be hope from this, and a few similar instances of misprision of the high treason of poetry, that our country may conclude her grand experience of a succession of poetical writers unequalled in the modern world, by learning some ages hence to know a poet when she sees one.

But Tennyson and Shelley, more particularly, walk in the common daylight in their “singing clothes.” They are silver voiced when they ask for salt, and say “good morrow to you” in a cadence.

They each have a poetical dialect: not such a one

as Wordsworth deprecated when he overthrew a system ; not a conventional poetical idiom, but the very reverse of it — each poet fashioning his phrases upon his own individuality : and speaking as if he were making a language thus, for the first time, under those “purple eyes” of the muse, which tinted every syllable as it was uttered, with a separate benediction.

Perhaps the first spell cast by Mr. Tennyson, the master of many spells, he cast upon the ear. His power as a versifier is remarkable. The measures flow softly or roll nobly to his pen ; as well one as the other. He can gather up his strength, like a serpent, in the silver coil of a line ; or dart it out straight and free. Nay, he will write you a poem with nothing in it except music ; and as if its music were everything, it shall fill your soul. Be this said, not in reproach, but in honour of him and the English language, for the learned sweetness of his numbers. The Italian poets may take counsel and envy “Where Claribel down-lieth.”

Tennyson seldom uses the *ego* of poet-dom ; and when he does you generally find that he does not refer to himself, but to some imaginary person. He permits the reader to behold the workings of his individuality, only by the reflex action. He comes out himself to sing a poem and goes back again ; or rather sends his song out from his shadow under the leaf as other nightingales do ; and refuses to be expansive to his public and open his heart on the hinge of music as other poets do. We know nothing of him except that he is a poet ; and this, although it is something to be sure, does not help us to pronounce distinctly upon what may be called the mental intention of his poetry.

Whatever he writes is a complete work ; he holds the unity of it as firmly in his hands as his *Ænone's* Paris holds the apple — and there is nothing broken or incomplete in his two full volumes. But for all this unity of every separate poem produced by him, there is or appears to be some vacillation of intention, in his poetry as a mass. To any question upon the character of his works, the reply rises obviously, — they are from dreamland ; and of the majority of those which he has since produced, the same answer should be returned. The exceptive instances are like those of one who has not long awakened from his dreams. But what dreams these have been, of what loveliness of music, form, and colour, and what thought — our foregoing remarks have very faintly expressed and declared. In the absence of any marked and perceptible design in his poetical faith and purposes, Tennyson is not singular. It would be equally difficult to decide the same question with regard to several others ; nor perhaps is it necessary to be decided. As the matter rests in this instance, we have the idea of a poet (these volumes in our hands) not in a fixed attitude ; not resolute as to means, not determined as to end — sure of his power, sure of his activity, but not sure of his objects. There appears to be some want of the sanctification of a spiritual consistency. We seem to look on while a man stands in preparation for a noble course — while he tries the edge of his various arms and examines the wheels of his chariots, and meditates full of youth and capability down the long slope of glory. The figure occurred to us suddenly, as an eagle might fly to our left hand ; and, as admirers of Mr. Tennyson, we accept the omen. One thing is sure. He has lived long enough for the

world not to let him die ; and to good purpose enough already, to secure the perpetual vibration of the silver chord of time, under the hand of another English poet.

III. MR. HORNE'S ACCOUNT OF "PSYCHE APOCALYPTÉ." — A PRO- JECTED DRAMA.

RESPECTING this Lyrical Drama — to which several references have been made in Miss Barrett's Letters, but no fragment of which has ever seen the light — it is necessary to state at the outset (in order to prevent all disappointments to her far-and-near admirers) that the drama was never written, nor was any one scene of it put into verse. A few fragmentary lines only were jotted down, here and there. The subject and scope of the whole, however, will be found very clearly expressed and designed, — as clearly, at any rate, as any speculations dealing with intense mysteries of our psychical nature can be made apparent through a poetical medium. The audience for such a Drama, had it been written, would indeed have been "fit and few ;" and for such only would it have been intended.

Some of the Letters containing the first thoughts about this Drama are missing. The following passage is taken from one of the earliest we can find ; it is very short :

"TORQUAY, May 6, 1841.

"As to the Drama, my questions won't turn their faces that way — although, *by the way* — if it ever is completed by these degrees, you will have to take into

partnership some successive generations of such as I am. But I don't ask about that, nor *pour le coup*."

How this Drama was to be entitled was the subject of several notes, and so were the characters. The name of "Cymon" was first proposed for the principal character (though subsequently changed to Medon), and the name of his foredoomed wife was left undecided. This was Miss Barrett's first rough draft of her proposed subject :

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

Cymon.	Psyche (Cymon's Soul).
His Wife.	Philosopher (Utilitarian?).
Dead Sister's Child.	Poet.
Chorus of Earth-Spirits, or of Ministering Heavenly Spirits.	

"An old Tomb. Child sitting there, 'because it is convenient.' His question upon the letters graven on the stone, (addressed) to Cymon, a man self-supposed to be complete in all experiences, and prepared for all events; wise and strong. Argument between the Child and Man, the prospective and retrospective, upon life and death, — the one inclusive of the other. Child, in despite of morals, sleeps on the grave.

"Low chorus of Ministering Spirits, guarding, not the dead, but the living. Voice and vision of Psyche — to the Man. His dread, and drooping of sense before that manifestation of the Inward. Can 'man see God and live'? Can he see the 'image of God'? Converse between the Man and the Psyche — the one, yet contrarious, and their mutual horror of the

unity. In regard to the hereafter, he shudders less at the thought of abstract death than of Psyche. The Curse. Psyche's voice dies away in the murmur of approaching multitudes.

"Cymon's marriage festival. Cymon and his bride. But Psyche haunts Love with mystic and mournful voices. The bridal singing broken by the (audible) wail of Psyche. Bridegroom's terror and flight. And most admired disorder among the guests.

"Cymon consults philosophy. Interview with the Philosopher. Psyche mocks all.

"Has recourse to Poetry. Interview with the Poet — who refuses to help him against Psyche.

"Cymon and the Child, among the mountains, and flying from Psyche into Nature. The Child's voice (and Nature's) echoed by Psyche. They find the abandoned bride dead among the snow.

"Cymon *dares* (bears) to look upon Psyche by the force of woe.

"Cathedral scene, and burial. Dread desolation of the Psyche and the Man beside the filled new tomb. *Vision of the Cross* — and Psyche being softened and beautified, and the Man purified and exalted in the ghastly light of that Divine Agony, *love* has its issue in *unity* and self-reconciliation. Cymon fears Psyche no more, by *the force of religion*."

The following Letter bears no date, or postmark, but speaks for itself in all respects :

"Your suggestions are excellent, and bring with them, suggestively, too, new courage. I like the Genii very much indeed.

"Should the Islanders (the Islander-Chorus, I mean) represent the five senses, or the conventionali-

ties which encrust the senses, and so body beyond body — opaker than the natural body? Will you consider? Perhaps both, in a measure.

“It seems to me that we should avoid allegory in any cold strict sense, — and hold fast the individualities of the human beings. It was only for this (to suggest the individuality of the principal personage) that I wrote down ‘Cymon’ — not from any special preference for the name. What will you have? Philaster — Arctas — Crates — Leon — Theanor — Herman? I am not sure I like either very much.

“For the bride — Evadne — Luce — Bertha (no) — Bianca — Violante — Viola — Elinda — Earine — a beautiful name which brings beauty of all sorts to remembrance, besides Jonson’s Sad Shepherd. You remember Earine —

‘Who had her very being and her name
From the first knolls and buddings of the spring.’

Maricance — or shall it be a German, to go with Herman? The Princess Royal might be suited out of this catalogue. Decide yourself.

“And as to the title generally — why, what shall be said? *That* is a graver point. ‘Psyche Unveiled’ would surely do — although it did suggest to my own associations Mr. Foster’s ‘Mahometanism Unveiled,’ and titles of the kind.

‘THE UNVEILED; a Psychological Mystery,’

would that be better? — anything better? — out of Mr. Foster’s way, and the ‘Nature Displayed’ people’s. You speak of a Greek-English title, such as the ‘Apocalypse of Psyche,’ or ‘Psyche Apocalyptic.’ Oh, it won’t do. Will it? Shall it be more

Greek than English? But then nobody, not most bodies at least, will know what we mean. 'Psyche, the Pursuer'? — or 'the Persecutor'? — 'Psyche the Terrible'?

"Well, I know what name you will choose for *me*, after all this. Perhaps a Greek one — and then it will begin with μ ." (A very faint pencil reference at the bottom of the note looks like $\mu\alpha\iota\nu\alpha\varsigma$.) "But it is hard upon me to expect an answer to such a question by an early post, when everybody admits that the title of a book, nowadays, takes more study than all the rest of it. You must think, yourself; and your first thought is better than the best of mine in the rear.

"I was pleased in every way by your expression of satisfaction with the rough outline I dared to send you. I felt it to be absolute daring — pleased every way, not the least with the sympathy of feeling. Only my head aches so that I can scarcely see to write down whatever part of the pleasure would be otherwise expressive. Oh, I have an agreeable sense of writing nonsense — convinced with the close of every sentence. Can you make out anything? I can't write any more.

"Ever truly yours,

"E. B. B."

The next Letter, though bearing no date, was evidently written a day or two after the above:

"Is Medon a name for our 'island monster'? Ænone, for the lady? I doubt. I don't know. My psyche is 'perplexed in the extreme,' upon this important point of nomenclature. And important it is, in a measure. Blowsabella wouldn't do for a heroine — not for us, at least. . . .

“Oh, yes ; you will settle all about the scenes. Your additional suggestions give a spring upwards to the whole scheme, — just what the encouragement of your approval and consent has given to *me*. Yet, in spite of all, I shall remain nervous to the last as to the temerity of working with you, —

‘ And you will be the best harpèr
That ever took harp in hand —
And I *should* be the best singèr
That ever sang in this land.’

But as it is, O King Estruese, where will be the symmetry ? The fault, at least, (as far as volition goes) will be with you.

“Yours, in harp and fellowship, and the minor key,

“ E. B. B.”

Accepting what had previously been proposed, as the subject of a psychological fable and plot, the following design and construction of Act I. was submitted in a letter to Miss Barrett :

First sketch of the Plot, and sequence of Thoughts and Emotions :

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEDON.	LEIRION — orphan child
EVANTHE — his betrothed	of Medon’s sister.
bride.	CHORUS — of Heavenly
PSYCHE — the Soul of Me-	Spirits.
don.	CHORUS — of Islanders
PHILOSOPHER.	— “of the earth,
POET.	earthly.”
	GENII — Spirits of the
	Island, etc.

The Scene is an Unknown Island of the Greek Archipelago.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—An old tomb, where Medon's father, mother, and sister are buried. Leirion is sitting among the flowers at the foot of the tomb.

Enter Medon. Dialogue between him and the Child,—the latter taking the lead by questions, the profound innocence of which impels Medon's thoughts and imagination into speculations upon life and death—and *his own identity*. The Child falls asleep at the foot of the tomb, as with embracing arms, while Medon is struggling with an impossible answer to those questions.

Chorus of Heavenly Spirits.

("Guarding the living, not the dead,"—as your note has it,—say so, here,—nothing can be finer than that, simply said, and not much worked out.)

The Chorus ceasing, a faint sound comes at intervals, and with broken pauses. Medon speaks—with strange apprehensions as in the roots of his hair—of some invisible Presence :

"It is some emanation from myself—

Yet stands apart from me ! What art thou ? — Speak !

Be manifest — nor hold me thus disfranchised,

Between two worlds !"

Voice of Psyche.

(This being your special idea — E. B. B. should write all the rest of this scene.)

Medon endeavours to reply to the Voice ; makes signs in the air, as if his Soul, speaking within him, called for the adumbration, — the Presence.

Vision of Psyche, who says,

“I hear myself in thee — and I appear.”

(Eventually Medon awakes the Child for protection. Leirion wakes. Psyche vanishes. Medon hurries away dismayed, with the Child clasped in his arms; his head in the Child's bosom.)

SCENE II.—Evanthe's bower. A grove of arbutus and laurel on one side; on the other a lake with one large swan gliding in the distance. Evanthe is standing in the centre, looking at the sun setting behind the far mountains.

Enter Leirion, running. (This dialogue to be written by E.B.B.) Soon after, *Enter* Medon, very slowly and guardedly. He is rather cold towards Evanthe; but she is full of affection.

The result of this scene is that Medon recovers himself. He forgets his recent heaviness and perplexity of thought; and (by an effort) the recent vision of Psyche. The effort becomes less and less necessary, and Evanthe is paramount. Love, for the time, has conquered, and their marriage festival shall no longer be delayed. He is so lost as not to bear in mind that the marriage had never been really determined on between them. But now his thoughts are full of it. He is anxious to think of nothing else. Arranges to assemble all on the Island—from the Poet and the Philosopher down to the aboriginal Islanders. Vision of happiness seen in the sunset clouds. Medon gives way to his impassioned imagination, and invokes all the Spirits of the Isle, since first it rose out of the sea, to be auspicious to his union with the beautiful Evanthe, and hover amidst the ascending spiral columns of the altar's incense.

"We hear thee, and we floating sing ;
 And through each wing
 We wreath the incense, rising, falling,—
 Our island's sweetest echoes calling
 From caves and coves,—
 The birds and groves
 Alike enthralling.
 O Medon ! banish doubt and dole ;—
 A lover should forget his soul !"

End of the First Act.

It will thus be understood how two persons, who had never met, and, as it seemed, were not likely ever to meet, were to write a drama conjointly, the work being portioned out by agreement, each having a copy of the design and construction. The Poetess having agreed to the proposals as to the First Act, suggestions for the Second were sent to her, with an apology for a little delay. Her reply quickly ensued.

"JULY 10, 1841.

"MY DEAR MR. HORNE, — I had your note yesterday, and have to-day the Second Act—and shall be sorry and remorseful on all to-morrow until sure that you will give up the thought of 'Psyche' till you give up the cough. I am not a desperate hunter. I like waiting in the dew ; and, provided we have the antlers, it may as well be in the afternoon as forenoon. Shall the clock make us quarrel ? No, no.

"What made me write was indeed impatience — there is no denying it — only, not about the Drama. Do you know what it is to be shut up in a room by oneself, to multiply one's thoughts by one's thoughts — how hard it is to know what 'one's thought is

like' — how it grows and grows, and spreads and spreads, and ends in taking some supernatural colour, — just like mustard and cress sown on (wet) flannel in a dark closet? First I begin with the simple impertinence of wondering why you didn't write to me — simple enough — although I don't call it altogether my own fault when I miss your letters. Then came the complex-*perplexing* 'in the extreme.'

"I was very sorry about the cough. Do not neglect it, lest it end as mine did, — for a common cough striking on an *insubstantial* frame, began my bodily troubles; and I know well what that suffering is, though nearly quite free from it now. So, let it be understood, consented and agreed to, and well approved on each side, that until your return to London, 'Psyche' is suspended.

"'The New Act' (Second) shall go to you in a day or two. Your 'spiriting' is most excellently done, and the Drama half-alive already.

"Ever and truly yours,

"E. B. B."

ACT II.

SCENE I. — Where and what, to be settled. Altar, priests, marble statues. Medon's marriage festival. Guests, including Islanders, etc. Celebrated by choruses, dances, etc. (All this to be written by E. B. B.) During this, "Psyche haunts Love with mystic and mournful voices," which Medon first hears — and, through the effect upon him, the voice of Psyche becomes audible to Evanthe, and then to all present. "The bridal singing is broken by the wail of Psyche." Guests in dismay.

•

Medon's terror and flight. Terror and disorder of all present. Evanthe is paralysed, and stands like one of the marble statues — every one else rushing away. Chorus and Semi-choruses outside, as of some who return gradually. They sing of how the dying lights of the bridal altar and incense-urns fall upon the statues, including Evanthe among them, and at first scarcely noting the difference. The Chorus of Spirits, as well as the marriage guests, to be written by E. B. B. ; but perhaps I may interpolate a rough Semi-chorus of Islanders.

SCENE II. — A deep hollow in a rock. *Voice of Psyche faintly heard, calling from within. Enter Medon, as if following — irresistibly attracted. "Converse between Medon and Psyche — one, yet contrarious, — and their mutual horror at the unity. In regard to the Hereafter, he shudders less at the thought of abstract Death than of meeting Psyche."*

Distant sounds, as of something terrible and multitudinous — whether of Elements or Spirits — or both.

Again those sounds. Psyche's voice resumes, but dies away in the noise of approaching multitudes. Different Choruses and Semi-choruses advancing. Psyche vanishes. Medon falls on his face.

The Curse (if you still wish to have it). This will comprise various Choruses and Semi-choruses — representing men, and all living creatures of earth. (E. B. B. to write the theological portions.) As for me, "eat, or be eaten" will chiefly be the theme under the above head — large and sad enough.

SCENE III. — The Seashore. Rocks at the back ; sand below ; the tide rising. *Enter the Philosopher upon a rock above. His soliloquy, — tending to*

deny the sanity of all the finest intellects of (future) Germany and elsewhere — you see what is meant — reducing all things to the perception of the external senses, and all knowledge to analysis.

Enter Medon, who disputes this, —

“What is thy fine analysis,
Compared with anything entire?
Moments of pain — moments of bliss,
Are poor to Life’s synthetic fire.
Dissect the blossom, leaf by leaf, —
Odour, form, colour, all expire;
Your knowledge feeds on ruin, grief,
And Nature weeps at man’s perverse desire.”

But the Philosopher says, —

“It is the mastery of the whole we seek :
As Nature builds by small degrees, so we
Un-build, to learn her workings — piece by piece.”

The Philosopher now proceeds, as you propose, to argue for a rigid exclusion of all transcendental speculations, and a close adherence to utilities in their most literal sense. To be laughed at, in some spiritual way of your own — “mocking” you call it in some birdlike fashion out of the air, no doubt — by *Psyche*. She will tell him, if you please, that the analytical mind is not the finest order of mind, whatever he may think ; — but the Philosopher, being unable to see *Psyche*, refuses to admit that he hears the Voice. A voice requires corporeal organs, and it is impossible to be heard without. *Psyche*, now, in louder tones, prompts *Medon* to declare aloud that the analytical mind is a second-rate order of mind. Whereat the Philosopher asserts, while losing his temper, that he

does not hear the voice of Psyche in reality — in fact, he denies the evidence of his senses, not being very well today. While thus discoursing, he steps over the edge of the rock, and falls into the sea, the tide having risen. He is saved by the nets of some of the poor savage Islanders, to a Chorus of their own. *Enter* the Poet. Dialogue with Medon, the latter complaining of being haunted, and otherwise deeply tormented by Psyche. “The Poet refuses to help him against Psyche.” *Exeunt* Medon and Poet, at opposite sides. *Enter* Chorus of Islanders. They lament having lost a good haul of fish by saving a man who told them to find their high and due reward in the self-approval of humanity and conscience. *Exeunt* Islanders. *Enter* Chorus of those who were guests at the marriage festival. They see Evanthe coming. Allude to her ill-treatment of the poor lost man, who was to have been a bridegroom. But they say he is recovering his mind, and that now is the time for *her*; — *now* she should endeavour to help Medon out of his morbid mental state, which of course they consider to be madness. *Enter* Evanthe. She is conscious of Medon’s distraction of thought and feeling, but does not at all understand the cause, nor has she any womanly instinct of what assistance she could offer. The Chorus exhort her to do something to help the poor troubled man. But Evanthe remains *passive* — from deficiency of intellect — of mental sympathy — of every instinct that might have prompted her to attempt recalling him; and also from gentleness, timidity, and helplessness. She believes she has lost his love, and has no sort of confidence in herself. She is incapable of an effort. (Now this is to be wished, “because it renders the fate of Evanthe more

natural, may serve as a warning to others, and saves Medon from the charge of an utterly diseased morbidity, or monomania, by suggesting that it was just possible he *might* have been reclaimed from his Soul's (Psyche's) too palpable presence and unrest.") The Chorus will lament to see her sink down upon the earth despairingly ;—

“ Like a crystal from a rock
Broken by electric shock !
Shattered —
Scattered —
All its brightness
Now a whiteness,
Bridesmaids mourn, and Phantoms mock.”

End of the Second Act.

The following Letter bears no date, but is full of restlessness as to the names of the characters :

“ Anthea — Evanthe — I don't recommend either. Elsewhere, prominently, you read *Earine* rightly, but you are perfectly right besides in eschewing the names of other people's heroines. All its beauty would not fit it for our purpose. Besides, I shan't be brave enough (although working with you) to touch a word hallowed by the atmosphere of that exquisite sad shepherd, which proves Ben Jonson a true poet, and no mere scholar, to the critics' faces.

“ Aglae — would Aglae do ?—or *Ægle* ? After all, my inclination is making towards Medon for the man's name, and to Evanthe (not *adne*) for the woman's. You are perfectly right as to the impertinence of a citizen-chorus. Oh, no — nothing ap-

proaching to an embodiment of the conventionalities would do ; but we might hint at them, notwithstanding, if the opportunity comes, and the graceful possibility, — might not we ?

“ Though perfectly right in abjuring German names, you made me smile a little by protesting against them, *because* ‘ it would be called German mysticism.’ Do you really suppose it will be anything else, in any case ? You will see what Mr. Darley (for one) will say to us in the *Atbenæum*. Yet I have an interest in the *Atbenæum*, for all its sins. They have been as kind to me, I do believe, on different occasions, as their consciences would let them ; and the Editor is liberal enough to send me a number every week, on account of a few very occasional contributions of mine, deserving no such gratuity.

“ Oh, you will build up the preface excellent well — and, do you know, I am watching your ‘ paces ’ altogether very curiously, besides the deeper interest. I want to see how you manage your creations — the creation of your edifices — never having stood near any poetical scaffolding before, except my own. And it appears that you take it very regularly. First, the title-page — then the preface — then, (words illegible) when you begin building, who knows but what you will send me away ?

“ No — no — the headache is no excuse — I have not frequent headaches — and if, just now, I’m rather more feverish and uncomfortable than usual, the cause is in the dreadful weather, — the snow, and east wind, and not Psyche. These extreme causes do however affect me as little, even less, my physician says, than might have been feared ; and I think steadily, hope steadily, for London at the end of May — so to attain

a removal from this place, which has been so eminently fatal to my happiness.

“The only gladness associated with the banishment here has been your offered sympathy and friendship. Otherwise, bitterness has dropped on bitterness like the snows, more than I can tell — and independent of that last most overwhelming affliction of my life” (one of her brothers having been drowned almost within sight of her windows) “from the edge of the chasm of which I may struggle, but never can escape.

“Ever yrs., E. B. B.”

“I forgot the title. Would not ‘Psyche Apocalyp té’ (*η* you know) be more correct, as well perhaps as more pedantic? I don’t mind if *you* don’t. What is your thought of ‘Psyche Agonistes’? I lean to it a little, perhaps.”

The next Letter bears no date, and no written date is necessary.

“Then let it be ‘Psyche Apocalyp té.’ Your reasons are abundantly good.

“Now, dear Mr. Horne, see how we have been beguiled. The necessary name *Psyche* drew me towards the propriety of holding a certain Greeknness in the other names; and this drew you into fixing upon Greece for a locality. Well, you are right. Only we need not be very local, need we? To tell you the truth, I had never thought about locality, — or, at least, about ours being other than some new new-world Isle, or continent. But let it be Greece. The Spirits will murmur to our feet the more readily.

“As to the time being *olden*, there are the objec-

tions you perceive, and which are insurmountable, and which we need not (happily) try to surmount. Indeed, the endeavour would eclipse, cloud over, the summits of our subject. Let it be, if you please, two hundred years ago, — or something less, or something more.

“But now, I am unreasonable or covetous. You say, ‘If we have the antique time, we may have a Chorus of Satyrs.’ I want the *modern time, and the Satyrs besides*. ‘Want’ is too strong a word. But I am *inclined* to the Satyrs — I lean to them. There is something ‘high fantastic’ in them, and deeply contrastive to the Heavenly Spirits. Then ‘dark earth’ falls with heavy suggestive noises. Your *woods*” (my letter coming from the forest at Loughton) “inspired you with the Satyrs.

“Yet, after all, there are certain objections which I glance at reluctantly — such as the difficulty of sustaining the right Satyrical tone, in the universal harmony. If we have them for a Chorus, we must *keep* them for a Chorus. Do think about it, dear Mr. Horne: you know so much more of artistic effects than I do. My private instinct is, after all, and certainly, to venture with them.”

But it was eventually agreed upon to let the aborigines — designated *Islanders* — stand in the place of Satyrs, so as not to “fall foul” of various spiritual Choruses, Genii, Voices, etc.

ACT III.

Construction proposed; and some interpolations by E. B. B.

SCENE I. — Mountains, opening upon green plains

beneath. Patches of snow gleam at the foot of the mountains. *Enter* Medon and (the Child) Leirion. They advance with hurried steps, but Medon knows not where he is going. He is only flying from Psyche — into Nature. (E. B. B. to write this Scene.) They pause for breath. The Child's voice speaks for (interprets the Voice of) Nature. And is echoed by Psyche, invisibly. Medon starts forward again — and stops suddenly at a form half covered with the drifted snow. It is the dead body of his abandoned bride, Evanthe.

The Child falls upon its knees — and buries its head in the cold snow of the cold bosom of white death. Medon, standing erect with anguish, calls upon Psyche to appear. He will fly no more. Psyche appears. Medon, sustained and strong by the reason of strong woe, is able to look upon and confront Psyche. But thereon, etc. (“*Query* — should this be transplanted to the close of the present Scene? Consider it.” — E. B. B. Yes. It had been placed further on.) But Medon is conscious that Evanthe has been the victim of his condition with relation to Psyche — and that every woman would most likely be made a victim under such circumstances. All this, reproaching Psyche — who makes no reply.

Medon is also conscious that the suffering and death of Evanthe has been the means of his recovery, and reconciliation with Psyche. Psyche now replies, and a very difficult task she will find it, needing to be helped by Chorus of Heavenly Spirits. (“I suggest erasing this, as unnecessary, in case of the other change.” — E. B. B.)

SCENE II. — A lofty forest vista, like a Cathedral. In the centre, a new-made grave, surrounded by

Islanders. Chorus of Islanders. The earthliness of death,—the horror of the blind that see only the worm.

“What do we see
 More than a dead bird, fallen from her tree !
 A dead fish on the shore !
 Their brilliant colours gone —
 Cold flesh — cold bone —
 No more — no more !
 The worm awaits us all behind death's door.”

The body of Evanthe is borne in, attended by Medon and the Child, with Psyche visibly hovering over them. Chorus of Heavenly Spirits. A contrast to the poor ignorant Islanders. Dread desolation (notwithstanding) of Psyche, Medon, and the Child, beside the grave, as Evanthe is lowered into it. The Child pleads against Death — and against Death in the world. Psyche and Medon both echo the Child. Chorus of Heavenly Spirits — declaring and explaining life to be only an intermediate state, and calling upon them for resignation, patience, and faith. (“*Query* : *life* must be a slip of the pen for *death*.” — E. B. B. — No : it was not.) They listen to this ; begin to consider it ; but in vain. It all rests upon faith ; and what proof or sign that this is well founded ? Vision of the Cross. Christ seen crucified. Chorus of Heavenly Spirits. (Christ is love — the Cross, suffering. See that Murillo picture, where the Mother and Father are giving up their Child to death — the Child also surrendering himself.) “Psyche being softened and beautified, and Medon purified and exalted in the ghastly light of that Divine Agony ” (*Query* — in the light of that Divine Self-

Devotion) “*love* has its first issue in unity and self-reconciliation. Medon fears Psyche no more, by the force” (as you say) “of religion.” (But *quoad* Evanthe?)

E. B. B. to work it out thus, I think. Medon perceives the change in Psyche; the Child perceives the change in Medon. Chorus of Heavenly Spirits (and perhaps Semi-Chorus of Islanders) helping to express the change in Medon. “Medon and Psyche reciprocate in lyrics, their sense of reconciliation and unity, crowned chorally by the Heavenly Spirits, and the Song of the beautified Evanthe” (through whose sufferings the reconciliation had been effected on earth), who is *seen* — at all events by Medon — shining among the Spirits. Finally, “a Great Chorus of reconciliation rising up from the universe to the Reconciler. — *Mem.* Do you agree to this? — otherwise, erase.”

Agreed upon. This Grand Chorus suggesting that, while Medon passes the remainder of his life in a hermitage near the Tomb of Evanthe, he will nevertheless find the contemplation full of sweetened regrets by reason of divine hopes. This latter suggestion must be brought close home to the human feelings by one good “touch of nature” for us in our present state. The remainder, all wings. E. B. B. to bring this to The End.

If every drama has certain general laws of composition, it is equally true that every original and individual drama has some special laws of its own. In the present instance, it was quite clear — as “this was not a love story, but a Psyche one” — that any attempt at dramatic effect of the usual kind was out of the ques-

tion. With respect to originality in the sense of being perfectly new, the old saying, that "there is nothing new under the sun," may be applied in the usual wholesale and erroneous manner. But as there are no two things exactly alike in Nature, so in Art the grand transformer of old things into new, is *treatment*. Mrs. Browning's "First Sketch," therefore, of "Psyche Apocalypsé" may be fairly said to stand upon its own ground, — or clouds, as the reader may view it.

The last note of the Poetess which we can find on this subject, thus concludes :

"The 'Tableaux' with your 'Fetches' is in London with papa — all the books I write in, being his of right, — I can't look at Friedrich's speech I have groined in my memory for it ever since.

"Oh, yes, — of course you must have often *seen* Psyche, 'in visions of the night, when deep *thoughts* fall upon men.' Good-night now, dear Mr. Horne. I must try, at least, to get to sleep.

"Ever yrs., E. B. B."

The "Tableaux" refers to a book of miscellaneous poems, tales, and illustrations, edited by Miss Mitford — that year, probably ; and the "Fetches" was a tragedy of mine in three scenes, founded upon a German legend. In one of the scenes, "Friedrich," being alone in some grove, suddenly meets the image of himself — not like a shadowy apparition, but the counterpart of himself ! A mono-dialogue, so to speak, ensues, in which his *double* echoes audibly nearly all that Friedrich says, while taking the same looks and gestures, as though a full-length image in a mirror had walked out of it. Possibly, something of this (with a special difference) may have unconsciously haunted the

imagination of Miss Barrett — just as the writer of it had himself been haunted by two lines from Shelley, where *The Earth* says that some thousands of years ago —

“ The magus Zoroaster — my dead child —
Met his own Image walking in the garden ! ”

This idea, so horrible if realized even by the imagination, was derived by Shelley, we believe, from some oriental myth of antiquity. These derivations and expositions are not by any means to be regarded as plagiarisms when turned to good account by new *treatment*, which Goethe, like Wordsworth, considered to be “ everything,” though that was carrying matters rather too far, because if treatment be everything, the subject would be nothing, which cannot be true in Art any more than in Nature. With what originality and truth Mrs. Browning would have treated her subject has been sufficiently indicated.

How this Lyrical Drama originated, and how curiously (and, at times, pathetically) it progressed in outline and structure, have been shown ; but why it was never written requires a word or two of explanation. A longer interval than usual occurred, during which Miss BARRETT, by consent of her physician, was removed from Torquay to the town house of her family in London. Something was done to the proposed poem, after a while, though not much, I think, and the fair convalescent was eventually permitted to take an airing, now and then, in an open carriage. The drive, “ one fine morning,” was extended beyond the usual time, and the carriage, in fact, returned empty. The young lady, inspired with a new light of life and hope, had vanished ; — and, some weeks

afterwards, suddenly reappeared beneath the sunny skies of Italy as ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING. Nothing, from this period, was done with regard to the brain-floating Lyric, by the poetess, so far as I know. Friendly notes passed between us, part of Mrs. Browning's being written by her husband, who was a much earlier friend ; but no reference was, I believe, made by any of us to the visionary Psyche. For my own part, I have never thought of completing it myself, not only because I should have felt that it was like treading upon sacred ground, but also from an artist-feeling and instinct, that a work projected, and very thoughtfully planned out, so as to be wrought in a certain pitch and compass, and in all its details, by combinate minds, could never possess, if accomplished singly, the harmonious and specific character and intentions of its original designers.

IV. THREE HYMNS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GREEK OF GREGORY
NAZIANZEN.

OF the two folio volumes which represent to us the name and genius of Gregory Nazianzen, the second, containing his poems, is by far the least poetical. There are poetical writers who are not poets — with whom the sight of the harp exorcises the music ; who invert M. Jourdain, and cannot write poetry if they know it. Of such is Gregory. He is an ORATOR, — less wordy and monotonous than Chrysostom, but more laborious and antithetical ; with a less flowing and winding tune among his sentences (Lydian measures) ; but nobler, I think, and more resonant, both

in thought and cadence. He can build anything lofty, except a "rhyme." Yet his verses are better than Cicero's — perhaps as good as Plato's; for whenever through the cloud of this folio of them we catch a glimpse of the luminous soul, we fall back upon ourselves for an increase of praise. To speak of the three hymns I have chosen for translation, as they are in their own old Greek, the first has the most unity of purpose, and is therefore the best whole poem of his I can remember anywhere. The second, a high argument, balanced upon antithetical pinnacles, is chiefly interesting as being characteristic. He delighted, like some other dreamers of the early time, to walk the still green groves of the Academy, carrying the Scriptures of God and his own faults — to say nothing of Plato's. The third hymn — an evening hymn — falls more easily into our language than either of the preceding ones, but has obvious beauties of its own, which I hope may be retained in some imperfect "life-in-death" manner, even in my version. All three poems have been faithfully, if not mortally, "done into English." — *E. B. B.*

HYMN I.

MONARCH and maker of the worlds, we bless thee !
We bless thee, who hast made the things which were
not,
And manifested those which did appear not,
The mental with a thought, and with a word
The sensual. Holy singers do confess thee,
Chanting in multitude their thronèd Lord !
The angels militant in fiery chorus,
The first-born, undefiled from their birth,

The great stars treading choral measures o'er us,
 The prophet-souls and spirits just of earth,
 All congregated, all around the throne,
 In joy and awful reverence bear along
 Ever that perfect and perpetual song,
 "Monarch and Maker of the worlds, we bless thee!"
 So, sinless singing, heavenly choirs address thee.
 And I too, holy Father, would be one
 To utter prayer — to bow thee the heart's knee,
 Undying Father, and sink inwardly
 Before thee. Praying so, my head doth droop
 Earthward, — I lie a suppliant, and weep free
 Because I am not worthy to look up
 Unto thy singing Heav'ns!

But may'st thou be,

O gracious Father, pitiful to me, —
 Propitious to thy servant — ruined : Lord,
 O stretch thine hand toward me and retrieve me
 From Death's dark jaws — make pure my thoughts ;
 and never
 Ungarmented by thy close Spirit, leave me !
 Rather new grace of bosom-force achieve me,
 That I, with heart and lip, may praise thee ever !
 And as my sire, thy servant, knew thy face,
 Grant me a life as clear, as pure an end,
 As brave a hope, — like mercy and like grace, —
 And all the sins my youth did comprehend,
 Forgive them like a king, — we so confess thee,
 And all day long and ever longer bless thee.

HYMN II.

O, above all ! (how else to sing thee forth ?)
 Can speech declare thee — spoken in no word !

Can mind behold thee — compassed by no mind !
 Alone, unspeakable, because the fount
 Of vocal life, — inscrutable alone,
 Because, of life perceptive ! yea, but all,
 Silent or eloquent, do utter thee —
 Intelligent or sensual, honour thee ;
 Their congregated passions and their pangs
 Scattered around thee ! And all pray to thee —
 And unto thee, all such as comprehend
 Thy synthesis of being, speak abroad
 A silent hymn. In thee alone, all rest.
 To thee, in rushing confluence, all leap up.
 Thou art the end of all — Thou, one and all ;
 And none, because not one nor all ! O, Thou
 Of all names, — who can cry on thee, alone
 The nameless ? What brave soul can pierce the
 veil
 Of Heaven above the cloud ? O, above all,
 (How else to sing thee forth ?) be *merciful* !

AN EVENING HYMN.

Now we utter praise before thee,
 O my Christ, O Word of God !
 Light of lights, unuttered mood,
 Giver of the Spirit's good,
 Threefold light, which doth conclude
 In a single glory !
 Thou who didst the darkness loose,
 And the clear light circumfuse,
 Therein to stand up Creator, —
 Fixing the unquiet matter
 Into forms of stedfast duty,
 And this now harmonious beauty ;

Thou who o'er man's soul hast sent
Reason's, Truth's enlightenment —
Of supernal radiance, so,
Placing here an image low,
That in light he light may see,
And become light utterly ;
Thou who tricked'st out the skies
With their star varieties,
Thou did'st teach the Night and Day
To follow meekly one another,
As friend would friend, and brother, brother
With honour to Love's law alway —
Giving, under one, cessation
To the flesh's weary passion, —
Under one, to deeds inciting,
Which Thy pure eyes take delight in, —
That, 'scaping from the darkness, we
To that actual day may flee,
Which can never fall or fade
In mighty dusk or twilight shade.

Do Thou on my eyelids cast
Gentle slumber, not too fast ;
That no deathly silence long
May enchain the tuneful tongue —
The thing Thou tuned'st so, to suit
The angels' singing, rendered mute !
And, by thy grace, my couch shall bring me
Thoughts of blessing to enring me —
Nor shall any stain of Day
Be proved on Night ; nor shall the play
Of midnight visions on her press,
To fright her from her holiness.
But let my soul, from body free,

Pray, Jehovah, unto thee —
 To the Father, to the Son,
 To the Holy Spirit — ONE —
 Whose be honour, glory, power !
 Amen, now and evermore.

The Athenæum, Saturday, Jan. 8, 1842.

V. A THOUGHT ON THOUGHTS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "AN ESSAY ON THE MIND,"
 "PROMETHEUS BOUND," ETC., ETC.

IN order to the comprehension of any sentence in this paper, it is unfortunately necessary for me to introduce to the reader's attention certain ancient acquaintances of my family. I allude to the ignoble house of the Words, lineal descendants of the Alphabet, and near connexions of the Syllables.

How sweet the words of truth, breathed from the lips of love !

Sweet, but not too frequent : there are words besides, both bitter and false. There are harsh words that "speak daggers," and smooth words that "use" them ; laboured words, whom you recognise as "*verba magistri*," and careless words, who cudgel your heart more than any master could ; first words, hard to articulate ; and last words, harder to forget. I cannot number "the multitude of words." Save me from hasty words ; they are a murderous tribe : I know some words that are kind and true, but when they come to your ear, they drive away their kindred from your lips, and their very memory makes you

wordless. Among the words is much of the "hidden soul of harmony," often so well hidden that it cannot be found; so well hidden that of all wars the most interminable is the "war of words." The foundation of most philosophical contentions is a verbal disagreement; and of most personal coldnesses, a verbal mistake. Contend about a truth, and you may shake hands afterwards; but differ about a word, and you have a foe for life. Gray witnesses to the fiery temperament of words by his "words that burn;" and Horace, to the fortunes of their war, "*verba cadunt*," as Homer, of old, to their cowardly tendencies, by his "*ἑπεα πτερόεντα*," — *winged words*, being a delicate form of expression for *words running away as fast as they can*. They are mischief-makers in an intense meaning. You might give days of your life for "a few words" with your dearest absent friend, yet they could not pass between you without your quarrelling. Virgil conjoins them to his idea of a poisoned goblet, "*non innoxia verba*." "Nothing but words" is a bad character of a friendly intercourse; and a "wordy writer" means no good of him. Byron's "Away with words" expressed his opinion of their utility; but Shakespeare made a serious attack upon their moral reputation in asserting that "words pay no debts." He certainly ought to have remembered that "words cost nothing." I believe I have said enough on this part of my subject; "a word to the wise," "*verbum sap.*" I need not quote Erasmus's "*Copia Verborum*."

In ancient days the Words held proud communion with the Thoughts, who led them to the high places of the earth, and wreathed their brows with amaranth. In modern times I would be just in my acknowledg-

ments ; when several of the Thoughts were falling fast into poverty, the Words came benevolently to their help, and threw around them their own "silk taffeta ;" in return for which compassion they did, however, exact so servile an attention and general a precedence, that the Thoughts, who are of kingly blood, could bear it no longer ; and thus, a coldness having arisen between the Thoughts and Words, no well-bred person ventures to invite them to the same hearthstone.

I will now revert to our own family, and will name, as one of its heads, Philosophical Thought, a lordly personage of retired habits and eccentric disposition. He is full of noble caprices. He is the loving associate of high abstractions ; and then, turning on his heel, denies their very existence. He builds up a golden shrine for Truth, and then pelts it with "native mud." He conquers some kingdom of intellectual glory, and then crowns himself with straws. The loss of Eden has touched his brain. He calls the moon—the sun ; he taught Thales, as the world's first principle, to look at water, and Anaximenes at air, and Heraclitus at fire, and Anaxagoras at similitude, and Anaximander at infinity, and Pythagoras at number ; and then he laid his face upon the earth, and wept that all were wrong. His wisest admission was, "I know that I know not." And likest is he to his own Plato's *το ου*, which (see the "Parmenides") "is the same with and different from itself."

Scientific Thought is shrewd and caustic, and very particularly sensible. He never does a foolish thing, except when he discusses a balloon. He has done a great deal of good in his time ; and, to tell a secret,

he takes a great deal of time to do good. He has meddled with all the wheel, and steam, and water, and wind engines, by which man ever travelled on carriage road or railroad, on air currents or water currents ; and with all the staring at the stars — and with all the analyzing of soils — and with all the ad-measurement of mountains — and with all the fathoming of seas — and with all the dyeing of Tyrian purple and printing of English calicos — and with all the printing machines, and thrashing machines, and calculating machines — and with all the mathematical, and astronomical, and surgical instruments — and with all wind instruments, from St. Cecilia's to a blacksmith's — and with all stringed instruments, from Paganini's to a coachman's — in short, with all that we comprehend, touch, smell, taste, hear, or see, besides a great deal that we neither see, hear, taste, smell, touch, or by any means (some of us) comprehend. Notwithstanding all this, he is rather a useful than an engaging person. He is too wise, and too unbending, and too pedigreeable to be agreeable. He will "talk an infinite deal," and his *something* is far duller than Gratiano's "nothing" — indeed, nothing can be more infinitely learned and dull than what he will talk. The iron, which he is always at work upon, "enters into his soul," and becomes a part of it. If he weep — quite an hypothesis — his tears, Pluto-like, are iron too ; and he never cares to smile, except on a principle of utilitarianism.

Poetical Thought ! — reader, light up the lamps of your spirit, and look at her. The glory of the earth, more than its glory, is burning in her eyes with a deep, mystical, unquenchable fire — with a fire which no weeping will quench. The lashes are wet, but the

eyes burn still. Burning, wandering, melancholy eyes ! The sword of the cherubim, which drove from the world its vision of beauty, left one in her soul, and from the depths of that soul she gathers it, and spreads it over the withering land, and wailing sea, and darkening sky ; and tries to call them, as God called them ere the ruin came, "very good." But her voice trembles and pauses beneath the weight of those God-spoken accents ; and, after she has looked in the face of human Truth, which is begrimed with dust, and of human Love, which is pale, though stedfast, she goes out, as Peter did, from her place of pride, and weeps bitterly.

Poetical Thought ! — how the Words serve her ! Their malice and their meanness do not dare to slacken their obedience : she "holds them with a glittering eye," and, if they wrong her, it is rather by belying than denying. This is true of all the Words except of such of them as are called technical terms : they are upon no terms with her. They are a stiff knee'd set of people, and never approached her in their lives without giving her reason to be sorry for it. Besides, their hands are always black with Scientific Thoughts, "dirty work," and not all the waters of Castalia, were they as warm as Buxton spring, could wash them clean. Philosophical Thought and Poetical Thought used to be warmly attached friends, but whenever they have met lately, in Paternoster Row or elsewhere, Poetical Thought has made it a rule to look another way. Indeed, though in secret and congenial friendship they bear one heart between them, they have always been subject to chance estrangements. They had one serious quarrel about Plato, and I can't help saying that Philosophical Thought was entirely in the wrong.

Let me mention, briefly, some other members of our family. There are Thoughts of the present, who are of a gloomy countenance, and Thoughts of the future, who are far too flighty, and Thoughts of the past, who freshen their own nosebags with their fast-dropping tears. There are changing Thoughts, who know the "way of the world," and faithful Thoughts, who look calmly at the grave. There are deep Thoughts, who speak a strange tongue (*"sub-obscurè,"* as the critics say), and shallow Thoughts, who have the "ear of the house." There are joyous Thoughts, who will "crack your cheeks" with laughter, and sad Thoughts, who, with sighing, may do the same by your heart, and weary Thoughts, who are sure to come in with your most frequent morning visitors. There are hackneyed Thoughts, who give their present patronage to the booksellers, and new Thoughts, who take a great deal upon themselves, and will introduce you into very mixed company. There are witty Thoughts, who are fair and rare, and foolish Thoughts, less hard to be met with, and, in common opinion, quite as agreeable. There are aspiring Thoughts, who wear their beavers up till the sun puts out their eyes, and humble Thoughts, who are quite *passées*, and out of fashion. *They* associate with religious Thoughts, and *they* — oh! nobody thinks of *them*! There are, besides, free Thoughts, who go to a Socinian chapel, and vain Thoughts, deeply learned in earthly goodness and happiness; and idle Thought — allow me to introduce to you — myself.

Now, with regard to myself, the Words abuse me cruelly; but Byron says, "All words are idle," so they may keep their abuse to themselves. I can make time pass as pleasantly as most of my kindred.

I will sit with you while you are fishing, or watch the clouds for you out of the window, or draw portraits for you in the fire, or build castles for you in the air, or write dissertations for you like *these presents*. You will commend me, I am sure; but, whether you do or do not, you must make use of me. "Bide my time."

In conclusion, let me entreat you to consider the wrongs of our family. Are we to be forever oppressed by that branch of the words called Epithets? Are we to be left in obscurity by words who are obsolete? Are we to be misrepresented by words of double meaning? Are we to be thrown into exile by words of no meaning at all? Are we to be absolutely knocked down by words of six syllables? Nay! are we to be subject to the aspersions of the world — such as, "a thought strikes me"? — or to its contempt — such as, "a penny for your thought"? Assist us, Mr. Editor! and I am ready to assure you, in behalf of our illustrious house, that we will ever be, as heretofore,

Yours to command.

I had thrown down my pen, when turning, I beheld at my elbow Concise Thought, an eccentric cousin of ours, so close in his economy as to be considered the very Hume of our household. His dwarfish form is contracted by tight stays, his tiny feet by Chinese shoes; for, as to be great is the common ambition of mankind, so to be little is the ambition of our cousin. Now, as Concise Thought utterly detests the Words, I expect nothing less than some Laconic compliment on my performance. Alas, for my expectations! "*Idle Thought!*" emphatically

said my cousin, with an epigrammatic turn of the hand, and contempt expressed at the expense of the least possible elevation of one eyebrow, "thou abusest words, and also usest." — *The Athenæum*, Saturday, July 23, 1836.

VI. ITALY AND AMERICA.

"Now the question is thrown into new probabilities of solution by that *fine madness* of the South, which is God's gift to the world in these latter days in order to a 'restitution of all things,' and the reconstitution everywhere of political justice and national right. See how it has been in Italy! If Austria had not madly invaded Piedmont in '59, France could not have fought. If the pope had not been madly obstinate in rejecting the reforms pressed on him by France, he must have been sustained as a temporal ruler. If the King of Naples had not madly refused to accept the overtures of Piedmont toward an alliance in free government and Italian independence, we should have had to wait for Italian unity. So with the rulers of Tuscany, Modena, and the rest. *Everybody was mad at the right moment.* I thank God for it. '*Mais, mon cher,*' said Napoleon to the Tuscan ex-Grand Duke, weeping before him as a suppliant, '*vous étiez à Solferino.*' That act of pure madness settled the duke's claims upon Tuscany. And looking yearningly to our poor Venetia (to say nothing of other suffering peoples beyond this peninsula) my cry must still be, '*Give, give — more madness, Lord!*'"

"The pope has been madder than everybody, and for a much longer time, exactly because his case was complex and difficult, and because with Catholic

Europe and the French clerical party (strengthened by M. Guizot and the whole French dynastic opposition — I wish them joy of their cause !) drawn up on the Holy Father's side, *the least touch of sanity would have saved him, to the immense injury of the Italian nation.* As it is, we are at the beginning of the end. We see light at the end of the cavern. Here's a dark turning indeed about Venetia — but we won't hit our heads against the stalactites even there ; and beyond we get out into a free, great, independent Italy ! May God save us to the end !

“ At this point the anxiety on American affairs can take its full share of thought. My partiality for frenzies is not so absorbing, believe me, as to exclude very painful considerations on the dissolution of your great Union. But my serious fear has been, and is, not for the dissolution of the body, but the death of the soul — not of a rupture of states and civil war, but of reconciliation and peace at the expense of a deadly compromise of principle. Nothing will destroy the Republic but what corrupts its conscience and disturbs its fame — for the stain upon the honor must come off upon the flag. *If, on the other hand, the North stands fast on the moral ground, no glory will be like your glory ;* your frontiers may diminish, but your essential greatness will increase ; your foes may be of your own household, but your friends must be among all just and righteous men, whether in the body or out of the body. You are ‘ compassed about by a great cloud of witnesses,’ and can afford to risk anything, except conscience.

. . . “ Ought not the North, for instance, to propose a pecuniary compromise taxing itself for *pecuniary compensation* to the South ?

. . . "What surprises me is that the slaves
don't rise!

. . . "Never imagine from anything said to you by Mr. Bayard Taylor, who remembers far too well a mere historical remark of mine upon the influence of government on art, that I am non-Republican. I honor Republicanism everywhere as an expression of the people; but it seems to me that a theoretical attachment to any form of government whatever is simply pedantry,—as if one should insist upon everybody's wearing one kind of hat, or adopting one attitude. A genuine government is simply the attitude of that special people. What we require for every man (or state) is life, health, muscular freedom to choose his own attitude. Let us be for the Democracy, and leave the rest. Who cares for the figure at the helm, as long as the people's wind is in the sails? I care little. Only I do care that the Democracy should have power—that each man should have the inheritance of a man, and the right of voting where he is taxed. So this is my creed.

. . . "Napoleon will come out admirably in the Italian results. He has had Europe at the end of the diplomatical sword of peace, and a European coalition against him as no remote contingency. Often what has seemed like opposition to our progress here has simply been putting on the drag down hill when the wheel was inclined to a perilous velocity. But there are some who cannot understand it—and more who will not. It will be enough that the Italian nation understands."

The Independent, March 21, 1861.

NOTES.

LAST POEMS.

Little Mattie. Line 24. *Rhameses*: Rhameses I. was supposed to be the Egyptian Pharaoh mentioned in the Bible as the "new king which knew not Joseph." Rhameses II., his grandson, was one of the oppressors under whom the Israelites toiled; and the name is used here to stand for the might and mystery of the royal line of Egypt, whose associations are so darkly colored by the idea of death.

83. *Michael and the Sword*: referring to one of the dread visions of John of the war in heaven, wherein Michael and his angels fought against the dragon. (See Revelation xii., 7.)

Void in Law. 44. *He'll new stamp the ore*: a distant allusion to the question "Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar?" (See Mark xii., 14-16.)

74. *But the Magi brought gifts*: Matthew ii., 1-11.

Lord Walter's Wife. This poem was sent at Thackeray's request with others for the *Cornhill Magazine*, of which he was then editor, but not accepted, as he tells her in a letter, because he felt sure it would be objected to by his squeamish public as the story of an unlawful passion, and although he acknowledged it to be "pure doctrine, and real modesty, and pure ethics," he was sure his readers would make an outcry. (See "Letters of E. B. Browning," Vol. ii., p. 444.)

Bianca among the Nightingales. 88. "*Grazie tanto*": "Thank you so much."

Line 127. "*Mio ben*": literally "my good," an endearing term, perhaps here also a quotation from the love-song, "*Caro mio ben*."

A Song for the Ragged Schools of London. Originally written in 1854 for her sister Miss Arabella Barrett's bazaar, where, printed in a small pamphlet, together with Robert Browning's "The Twins," they were sold for the benefit of the Ragged Schools, at sixpence apiece.

81. *Angli, angeli*: referring to the old story of the little English children in Rome whose fair hair and blue eyes attracted the admiration of the Pope. "Whence come they?" he asked, and being told that they were Angles he rejoined, "*Non angli, sed angeli*," "not Angles, but angels."

De Profundis. Written in 1840, and referring to the death of her favorite brother, Edward. First published December, 1860, in *The Independent*, New York, wherein most of the remaining poems first appeared (see Chronological Bibliography, Vol. I., for these).

A Musical Instrument. Mrs. Browning speaks of this poem in a letter of April, 1860, as the last thing she has written. It was published first in the *Cornhill Magazine* for July, 1860.

1. *What was he doing, the great god Pan*: the legendary material out of which the poet has woven this poem is derived from one of the stories with which, according to the Greek myth, Mercury lulled the watchful hundred-eyed Argus into forgetfulness of his charge, the luckless Io, enabling her to be set free. It tells the origin of the Syrinx or Pandæan pipes in this way: There was a nymph named Syrinx wooed by all the wood sprites and satyrs, even by Pan himself, the earth god; but the lovely girl disdained them all, and would not stop even to hear Pan's honeyed pleading. Pan pursued her, and she ran from him to the river bank, calling wildly upon the water-nymphs to deliver her. They changed her into water-reeds, so that when coming up he would have clasped her he grasped only a clump of murmuring reeds that

echoed the sighs he breathed through them. This plaintive music so charmed him that he declared, "Thus, at least, you shall be mine," and cutting the reeds into unequal lengths and lacing them together side by side, to blow through, he made the pipe called the *Syrinx*. (See Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, i.)

First News from Villafranca. Line 1. *Peace, peace, peace, do you say:* Austria was successively defeated in June, 1859, by Napoleon III., in alliance with Victor Emmanuel, and yet the victor sent to the vanquished, to the amazement of all Europe, a special messenger to ask for an armistice. A meeting with Francis, Emperor of Austria, followed, when terms of peace were agreed upon by Napoleon III., which left Venice in Austria's possession and seemed to shut the opening door of liberty in the face of an Italy aroused and flushed with triumph. (See "A Tale of Villafranca," Vol. III. of this edition, and notes thereon.)

6. *The cursed flag of the yellow and black:* the colors of Austria.

8. *And this the Mincio:* the waters flowing from the Lago di Garda to the Po, towards which Napoleon appeared ready, when he entered Milan, to satisfy the Italians of Central Italy by pushing the war, but he was justified in stopping short of it, unless he were to disregard the spread of the war, by the threat of Prussia that she would attack if he crossed the Mincio.

16. *A pair of emperors stand in the way:* Francis Joseph of Austria, and Napoleon III., of France, the one, of course, whom our poet considers was "a man, beside" being an emperor. She knew later (see her "Letters," Vol. ii., pp. 396, 402) that Prussia caused the Villafranca halt, for she cites the declaration of the Prussian minister, Baron Schleinitz, that six Prussian divisions were ready to march if the Mincio were crossed.

19. *Mused at Paris:* at the secret sitting of the European powers at the Congress of Paris, April 8, 1856, the foreign occupation of Central Italy and the Roman and Neapolitan governments came up, and was stigmatized

by Lord Clarendon in severer terms than Cavour, the Piedmontese delegate, would have thought it prudent to use, Count Buol, representing Austria, growing very angry, whereupon Cavour, turning to the others, said quietly, "You see that diplomacy can do nothing for Italy. The question needs another solution." Napoleon sat silent, observant, musing. Privately, also, he asked Cavour the now historic question, "What can I do for Italy?" which resulted, finally, in the alliance with Victor Emmanuel.

Line 20. At Milan spoke: the French troops joined the Piedmontese forces in May, 1859, and Napoleon entering Milan, leading his army in person, proclaimed in a public address his desire to see Italy a free nation and to help towards it himself. (See "An August Voice," note 95, Vol. III. of this edition.)

21. At Solferino: perceiving the importance of seizing the heights of Solferino in the battle of June 24, 1859, Napoleon engaged the French to take them at any cost, and after six hours' struggle they were won through French valor, but with great loss, and victory over the Austrians was thereby attained.

King Victor Emanuel entering Florence: the fruit of the freedom from Austrian overlordship won by the allied forces of France and Piedmont was the unification of Italy under the King of Piedmont, Victor Emmanuel of the house of Savoy; but this fruit was not ripened until Naples and Sicily and the Italian duchies gradually got rid of their rulers, and the Pope lost his temporal power. The ultimate result depended now largely upon Victor Emmanuel's attitude. After the Peace of Villafranca he was urged by Napoleon to submit to an Austro-Italian confederation, but he replied that his fate was joined to that of the Italian people. "I am moved to the bottom of my soul by the faith and love which this noble and unfortunate people has reposed in me, and, rather than be unworthy of it, I will break my sword and throw the crown away, as did my august father. Personal interest

does not guide me in defending the annexations; the sword and time have borne my house from the summit of the Alps to the banks of the Mincio, and those two guardian angels of the Savoy race will bear it further still when it pleases God." In August, 1859, Modena, Reggio, Parma, and Piacenza "declared their union with Piedmont by an all but unanimous popular vote," says Martinengo (in her book "The Liberation of Italy," page 256). "A few days later Tuscany and Romagna voted a like act of union through their Constituent Assemblies." Accordingly in April, 1860, as our poet records, Victor Emmanuel entered Florence, the capital of Tuscany, as her king. (See Vol. III. of this edition for further notes on Victor Emmanuel.)

Line 6. *Cavour*: Count Camillo (Aug. 10, 1810–June 6, 1854), the prime minister of Victor Emmanuel and the intellectual embodiment of Italy's unification, for which he planned and worked unceasingly, through the king, to whose trials and good faith he could indeed bear witness. (See "Life of Cavour," by the Countess Evelyn Martinengo Cesaresco, 1898, for a graphic account of the many steps of the process of making Italy a nation, which are well summed up in the preface of that book to this effect, that Cavour controlled and coalesced to that supreme end the many forces already at work, the moral enthusiasm, the spell of heroism, the ancient potency of kingly headship represented in the Savoyard dynasty of Victor Emmanuel. The first point in his plan was to make Piedmont a lever by which Italy could be raised; the second, to cause Austrian power in Italy such a shock that it would never recover; the third, to prevent the powers from impeding Italian unity when it became plain that the Italian people wanted it. For this last point England was made use of; for the second, Napoleon III.; for the first, the King of Piedmont, Victor Emmanuel, and his steady loyalty almost equalled that of his skilful minister. See also notes on "Poems before Congress," Vol. III. of this edition.)

43-45. *The Heart . . . pining away by Oporto's side:*

the preceding King of Sardinia and Piedmont, Charles Albert, Victor Emmanuel's father, who, beaten by the Austrians, in 1849 was forced to give up his hopes for an Italy united with Piedmont, to abdicate his throne to his son, and to retire to Oporto as an exile. (See "Casa Guidi Windows," note 695-723, Vol. III. of this edition.)

Line 52. *The nation invites him to enter his Pitti*: the Pitti Palace, the residence of the former grand-dukes and the official home of the rulers of Florence.

61. *Riddle the last of the yellow to rags*: the color of the hated Hapsburg and Bourbon rulers.

The Sword of Castruccio Castracani. Motto. "Questa è per me": "This is for me," the words of Victor Emmanuel at the time of the incident which the poem relates.

2. *His Lucca*: Lucca is in the province of the same name bordering on the Gulf of Genoa, and in Tuscany, of which it was made a part in 1847. It was annexed to Victor Emmanuel's kingdom of Sardinia in 1860, when the celebration described by the poet took place in the beautiful little Italian capital.

7. *The green forest-walk on the wall, etc.*: Lucca is a walled city encircled with hills planted with vines and olive-trees and surrounded by the Apennines. The Palazzo Publico is the chief among its palaces, and was the residence of its Gonfalonieri in the days of its ancient republic. Most of its churches are built of Carrara marble; its cathedral belongs to the eleventh century, and is rich in mosaic, inlaid, and carved work, and it has several old and valuable pictures to which the poet refers.

16. *The vote in Savoy*: at an election held in Savoy April 15, 1860, under the pressure of French emissaries, working now against an over-strong Italy and in order to secure the cession of Nice and Savoy to France, the election of Garibaldi to the new chamber, which had taken place in March, was reversed, and the province given over to France. There is almost no doubt but that the cession of Savoy to France was originally agreed

upon with the reluctant consent of Victor Emmanuel as the recognition of French aid, when Cavour and Napoleon met at Plombières, and outlined the terms of their alliance, but the possession of Nice by the French was left open. Cavour himself wrote that he said yes as to Savoy, but as to Nice, that it was too distinctly Italian; whereupon the Emperor twirled his mustache and rejoined that these were secondary questions about which there would be time enough to think later. Not Italy alone was loth to give up Savoy and Nice on the abrupt termination of the war by Napoleon with the task of a redeemed Italy unfinished and dubious, but England and Prussia also were ill-content to have France gain such advantages. Napoleon himself, if not by personal inclination, then because of the attitude of the Italian people, of England, and of Prussia, was forced to move cautiously, while forced also to justify the war in some way to the French; hence it is likely that he was compelled to seem to withdraw while increasingly anxious — as he saw that nothing could prevent the annexations of the Italian provinces, especially Tuscany, to the throne of Victor Emmanuel — to get some solid benefit out of Italian unity. To these complications as to Savoy the poet here refers, and it would certainly be enough to explain any moodiness of the King at this time in the midst of his triumph in Tuscany that he was crossed by the thought of Savoy, the cherished home of his royal house.

Line 21. *Pistoia*: a town in Tuscany twenty miles northwest of Florence, the home of the descendants of Castruccio.

24. *The sword of Castruccio*: Castruccio Castracani (1284-1328), Italian soldier, of the Antelminelli family, born in Lucca, who distinguished himself in the "strife of intestinal hate" carried on between the Guelfs and Ghibellines, fighting on the side of the latter party with his sword, as Dante with pen. He was proclaimed dictator of Lucca in 1320. The story of his troubled life, as one of the earliest to attempt a unification of Italy, is told by

Machiavelli in a romantic, significant way, this warrior's control in Lucca having been made with the assent of the people, and his subjugation of Pistoia, Florence, and adjoining territories having been followed up by a consolidated and wise administration far ahead of the disruptive political ideas of the time. Louis of Bavaria recognized his valor and ability, led him to power over Pisa, also, and at the coronation of Louis, as emperor at Rome, he made him Chevalier of the Empire and gave him the sword of the Empire. Hence the meaning of Victor Emmanuel's emotion on receiving this sword. It was to him a token bequeathed him through the ages by an earlier unifier of much-divided Italy. The constructive work done by Castracani was ruthlessly broken up at his death, his little principality fell to pieces, his sons were hunted to the mountains, proscribed as perpetual outlaws; but again and again some one of the line more or less ignorantly and unadvisedly asserted the old spirit, and under the badges of different political parties — Guelf sometimes, as was Paul Guinigi, who was yet called the successor of Castracani, the Ghibelline — kept alive the Italian idea for which the family stood in the popular mind. (See *Opere di Niccolò Machiavelli*, edition of 1820, in nine volumes, Vol. iii., pp. 191-223.)

Line 46. *Hapsburg and Bourbon*: the allied royal dynasties of Austria and Spain; the kings of Sicily and Naples belonging to the Bourbon line, the dukes of Tuscany, Parma, Modena, and other of the Italian petty states to the Austrian Hapsburg family.

Summing up in Italy. 9. *The speech in the Commons, which hits you A sketch off, etc.*: refers to information given in the English House of Commons, based on Gladstone's "Letters to the Earl of Aberdeen," in which he disclosed what prisons in Italy under Austrian rule were, and what merely political prisoners had to suffer in them from filth, cruelty, and hardships of all sorts. The impression this made on public opinion at the time was great, the phrase "The negation of God erected

into a system of government " passing into every-day speech as a synonym especially for Bourbon rule in Naples.

Line 11. *The official dispatch*: refers to the efforts of Lord Derby's ministry to ward off war. Lord Cowley having been sent to Vienna, Feb. 7, 1859, expressly to establish an agreement between France and Austria, sent, March 10, an official dispatch to Lord Malmesbury, chief of the Foreign Office, concluding, " As long as Piedmont is allowed to remain under arms I doubt Austria's willingness to negotiate . . . the chief aim of English diplomacy was the maintenance of the *status quo*." In a speech in the House of Lords Lord Derby declared that the Austrian was the best of good governments, and only sought to improve its Italian provinces, and he tried hard to suppress the sympathies aroused by the arrival of the Neapolitan prisoners. He officially urged upon Austria the advisability of leaving the states of Central Italy to themselves and of evacuating the Papal States, but assured her of England's neutral policy, and asked Cavour to help by formulating means for the peaceable amelioration of Italy, to which Cavour replied by answering that the heart of the evil lay in hatred of a foreign yoke, and Austria replied by delaying the outbreak of the war one week. The Liberal party, despite its expressed sympathy at earlier moments, and again more substantially after Villafranca, was, in 1859, not at all opposed to this official coldness. After the Congress of Paris, in 1856, Lord Palmerston even, whose ministry was friendly to Italy's aspirations, as Lord Castlereagh's and Lord Derby's were not, put the question to Cavour in the name of the British Government whether it would not be better to disarm the opposition of Austria by depriving her of every plausible excuse for combating the policy of Piedmont. Cavour replied to the effect that his party could not live on amicable terms with Italy's oppressors, England was at liberty to renew her old alliances with Austria if she chose, Lord Palmerston might end where Lord

Castlereagh began, but upon that ground he could not follow her.

Line 25. *Azeglio*: Massimo d', a north Italian, predecessor of Cavour as prime minister of Piedmont, handsome, beloved even by his political enemies, and of aristocratic birth. He had lived in Rome for many years as a painter of talent, was widely known as a writer of historical novels. He came into prominence as a judicious patriot, first, in a political pamphlet on the future of Romagna. Later events approved fully the knowledge of facts he showed, and his temperate yet firm advocacy of the only way out of her difficulties for Italy in general, that way being the expulsion of priestly and of Austrian rulers, through the force that could only be exercised hopefully — through Piedmont, the one Italian state with an independent life, an army, and a treasury. He fought and was wounded in the war of Charles Albert, Victor Emmanuel's father, against Austria, in 1849, and after the peace became President of the Council in Piedmont. In this capacity he did much to curb, by the laws then introduced, the sole control of education by the church, to check the multiplication of convents and feast days, to authorize civil marriage, and make priests amenable to common law. In the Chamber of Deputies as orator, and later, after Cavour succeeded him as minister, as a supporter of every direct step towards the unification of Italy, Azeglio attested his political intelligence and disinterestedness.—*Farini*: Luigi Carlo was Minister of Public Instruction in Piedmont, as a nominee of Cavour's in 1851. He was an exile from the Romagna, and more conservative in opinion than most of the gifted Italians who were instrumental in the liberation of their beloved country. His first political appearance consisted in writing the manifesto issued by the revolution of young men under Pietro Renzi, in 1845, in which they offered to lay down their arms upon the granting of a council of state for Romagna, lay education, and a secularized administration of public affairs. Later, after the insurrection at

Bologna, he restored order. His work on the Roman State, "Lo Stato Romano," won him public attention, and the especial praise of Gladstone, who accounted him "one of the most illustrious statesmen of Europe." He was especially commissioned by Cavour to act for the king in governing Modena, 1860, to foster the annexation of Sicily to the Italian kingdom and govern the new provinces. — *Mamiani*: Count Terrenzio della Rovere (1800—), poet and philosopher, as well as patriot, took part from the first, in his native Romagna, in the Italian movement. He was one of the members of the Bologna provisional government, and, after its suppression by Austria, went to France and established a propaganda in the interest of reforms in Italy. Upon the accession of Pius IX., in 1846, he returned to Italy and took part as Minister of the Interior with the moderate liberals. Convinced that no real reform would come through the Pope, he withdrew to the north of Italy, was naturalized as a Piedmontese, and became Professor of Philosophy in the University of Turin, Minister of Public Instruction, representative of Piedmont in Switzerland, and was influential in the Piedmontese Chamber as deputy from Genoa. His published works are numerous, — chief among them are his "Rinnovamento della filosofia antica Italiano" (1835), "Della Psicologia di Kant" (1877), "Filosofia della Realità" (1880), also pamphlets on politics and law, books of verse, and on poets of the Middle Ages.

Line 26. *Ricasoli*: Baron Bettino, born in 1805, was a conservative but devoted Tuscan patriot who was practically dictator of Florence at the critical time of the presence of the French allies in Italy after the victories over Austria, hence nicknamed "the Iron Baron." He held firmly to the idea of a constitutional monarchy and the unification of Italy under Victor Emmanuel, being himself a power in bringing it about. He was, like most of the men of this political movement, of illustrious family, and had held office under the old Grand Duke, but with small

satisfaction, retiring often to his vine and silk culture, until 1859, when the ability of the Italians had the opportunity to reveal itself.

Line 27. *Pepoli*: Marquis Joachim-Napoleon, born in 1825, was a son of a Princess Murat and therefore a cousin of Napoleon III., as the poet implies in her next line. He was a member of the Committee of Public Safety in Bologna in 1848, acted as colonel in 1859 at the head of the movement to expel the Austrians, and was made Minister of Finance in Romagna in 1860; served also as deputy and as Governor of Umbria; in 1862 he was a member of Ratazzi's cabinet, when Ratazzi took the premiership on Cavour's withdrawal; was minister to St. Petersburg from Italy in 1863; because of his family relationship with Napoleon he was sent to treat with him for conditions on the evacuation of Rome by the French; and in 1868 he became the ambassador of Italy to Vienna.—*Cipriani*: Leonetto, born in 1814, of a Tuscan family of rank and fortune. His parents sent him to their plantation in the Antilles at seventeen to keep him away from the threatening revolution of the Young Italians in which Louis Napoleon and his brother were associated in 1831, but he was in the thick of the uprising of 1848, as cavalry captain, and as colonel to Charles Albert the following year. In 1853 he was in California, in 1855 back in the midst of Italian affairs, and assisting in the alliance of Napoleon and Victor Emmanuel. After Villafranca he held the general governorship of Romagna until that province had by vote united itself to Victor Emmanuel's domain, when he returned to California.

29. *Arese*: Count François, a Milanese noble, born in 1805, was an especial family friend of Queen Hortense and of her son, both before and after he became the Emperor of France and the liberator of Italy, and as devoted also to the interests of his beloved nation. Napoleon offered to ask as a personal favor for the removal of the sequestration of Arese's family estates, but the Count refused, saying he would take his chance with the rest.

He served as Senator and Cabinet minister after 1859, and was sent from Piedmont to inform Napoleon of Victor Emmanuel's taking the title of King of Italy in 1861, again and again serving Italy as ambassador to France.—*Laiatico*: probably the husband of the Madame Laiatico, mentioned in "The Dance," line 26. (See Vol. III., notes, page 428.)

Line 31. *Garibaldi*: Giuseppe (1805-1882), born in Nice, was made a member of Mazzini's society, "Young Italy," by a sailor on the shores of the Black Sea, the Italian sailors everywhere spreading the cause of a united and free Italy, and he himself said that he made a pilgrimage to Marseilles, in 1833, to see Mazzini and light his mind from the sacred fire of his patriotism. Going thence to Genoa and enrolling himself as a common sailor to spread the faith, he narrowly escaped arrest and death as an enemy of the State by sailing for South America, where he spent twelve years between the Amazon and the Plata. There he married the beautiful Anita, a Brazilian. Returning to Italy, he offered his services and those of his band of men to the Pope when Pius IX. was believed to be a friend to Italian liberty, but on finding that Piedmont had taken up the tricolor of Italy, he offered himself to Charles Albert as one "not unused to war." The Provisional Government of Milan gave him command of a few thousand volunteers, and he and they distinguished themselves at every following chance that offered to strike a blow for Italy. Cavour summoned him from his island of Caprera (bought by him with an inheritance from his brother) at the opening of the Napoleonic war, and in March, 1859, he was invited to command the auxiliary corps of volunteers called "*Cacciatori della Alpi*," Hunters of the Alps. At the close of the war Garibaldi proposed to defend the freed provinces, and make revolution possible and successful in the south of Italy as occasion afforded. His great work of freeing the kingdom of Sicily, at the head of the famous "Thousand," resulted in the evacuation of the island by

the royal troops and the practical dictatorship of Garibaldi in 1861. He made his conquests in Sicily the base for a conquest of Naples, and when Naples was also liberated he held on to it as a base for the liberation of Rome and the proclamation of Victor Emmanuel from the Quirinal Palace as King of all Italy. The irregular way in which Garibaldi sought to attain that goal, although it was the wish of all the Italian people, involved both himself and the kingdom of North Italy in complexities and difficulties which put them into opposition with each other and resulted in the Italian forces marching against Garibaldi in order to prevent him from passing the Papal frontier. They met and seized him at Aspromonte, Aug. 29, 1860, and although he made no defence, some of his excited followers returned the fire, and in walking up and down between the two lines quieting his own men he was struck by a bullet and severely but not dangerously wounded. The French evacuated Rome in December, 1866, as agreed, and in 1867 Garibaldi advanced against the Pope. The Italian government was forced by the French alarm for the head of the Church to prove non-complicity with the hero who had given them Sicily and Naples by arresting him. Later he was sent to Caprera, whence he escaped to Florence, nine men-of-war, it is said, being dispatched by zealous friends of the Papal power to the waters near his island to capture him. Upon Garibaldi's return to action, a conflict with the Papal troops, reinforced by the recently landed French soldiers returned to defend the Pope, resulted in Garibaldi's defeat at Mentana, whereupon he was again arrested by the Italian Government and sent once more to his home in Caprera. There he died, but not until ten years after Victor Emmanuel had made his triumphal entry into Rome in 1872, and the aim to which he had devoted his life was attained.

Line 32. (*As soon as he ends in the South*): that is, as soon as the undertaking, in process then, of delivering Sicily and Naples from Bourbon rule and annexing them to

the new nation was completed Garibaldi's career could be summed up. She wrote in 1860 of her great anxiety for Garibaldi, acknowledging that while never was there such a feat of arms, it was necessary for Italy as well as Paris to be ready to disavow him, for the whole good of Central Italy was risked to an evil beyond failure if it were not success, and she pointed out how different was intervention at Naples and in Lombardy. For there the tyrant was foreign, while in Naples Italians deal with Italians and the Austrian influence is *indirect* as also at Rome.

Lines 33-40. *Napoleon — . . . the infernal machinery*: judged by the outcome for Italy, the initiative Napoleon III. took in giving the Italians the advantage of the French alliance against the Austrians, in 1859, resulted in an undeniable good. However imperfect the man be conceded to be, argues the poet, the machinery in him for evoking such a result could not be altogether infernal. The most rational explanation of Napoleon's liberation of Italy must finally be one that takes into consideration all the facts: his youthful enthusiasm for Italy, the lukewarmness and opposition of France, together with the sudden breaking off of the war, and the rescue of the Pope at Mentana, in 1867, all of which lead to the inference that the venture proceeded from one of the best impulses of the man himself, later events revealing how the clerical party in France forced him through weakness into the opposite policy. The intervention in Italy, Mrs. Browning wrote to Mr. John Forster, as late as May, 1860, while it overwhelmed her with joy, did not dazzle her into doubts of the motive of it, "but satisfied a patient expectation and fulfilled a logical inference. Thus it did not present itself to my mind as a caprice of power, to be followed perhaps by an onslaught on Belgium and an invasion of England. Have we not watched for a year while every saddle of iniquity has been tried on the Napoleonic back, and nothing fitted? Wasn't he to crush Piedmontese institutions like so many eggshells?"

Was he ever going away with his army, and hadn't he occupied houses in Genoa with an intention of bombarding the city? Didn't he keep troops in the north after Villa Franca on purpose to come down on us with a grand duke or a kingdom of Etruria and Plon-Plon to rule it? And wouldn't he give back Bologna to the Pope? . . . Were not Cipriani, Farini, and other patriots his 'mere creatures' in treacherous correspondence with the Tuileries 'doing his dirty work'? etc. Of all of these accusations Mrs. Browning reminds us the most intelligent English journals were full, and against "the Vast Inane and Immense Absurd from which they were born" she balances the thing done — "only a nation saved." Mrs. Browning died before Mentana, which would have been a poignant grief to her, but that she would not have been surprised is clear, for she saw in 1860, as she says, that Napoleon's position in France was hard enough to maintain. "Forty thousand priests with bishops of the color of Monseigneur d'Orleans and company, having, of course, a certain hold on the agricultural population which form so large a part of the basis of the imperial throne. Then add to that the parties who use this Italian question as a weapon simply."

Line 41. *Cavour*: of Piedmont's prime minister, Count Cavour, Mrs. Browning wrote at his death in 1861, that she could scarcely command voice to name "that great soul" who meditated and made Italy. "A hundred Garibaldis for such a man," she declares.

49. *And the King, with that "stain on his scutcheon"*: [Blue Book: Diplomatical Correspondence. — E. B. B.]

60. *No need of the sepulchres now*: an allusion to the splendid mausoleum, the Superga, where the kings of the house of Savoy were buried (see "Casa Guidi Windows," notes 695-723), and from whose portal she imagines "the dream of a voice" — Charles Albert's — approving his son's accomplishment of that he was unable to effect.

"Died . . ." 24. *Jacet jam*: he lies now.

33. *Cæsar's due*: an allusion to Christ's answer as to

the tribute money, "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's," etc. — *Charon's dues*: the obolus put between the lips of the Greek dead to pay their passage across the Styx, the river of death, to the boatman Charon.

The *Forced Recruit* celebrates an actual incident of the battle of Solferino. "Among the Austrian dead a youth was found," said the newspaper reports of the battle of Magenta, "whose musket had never been loaded, and on him were papers declaring that he, a Venetian, had been forced to serve, but he never would fire on his countrymen, and only desired to be killed by them. The Italians took off the hated white uniform of Austria and buried him with their own dead, that his spirit might have rest."

Garibaldi. Line 3. *Perhaps we are not ill-repaid*: refers to the wounding and arrest of Garibaldi, in 1860, at Aspromonte. (See "Summing up in Italy," note 31.)

7. *Perhaps the people's vote, etc.*: alludes to the Nice plebiscite, which resulted in its annexation to France after it had voted annexation to Piedmont.

24. *The olives and the palms of Nice*: where Garibaldi was born.

54. *Palermo's taken*: on the 17th July, 1860, as a result of Garibaldi's Sicilian expedition.

Only a Curl. 45. *With a cup thrust in Benjamin's sack*: Genesis xlv., 1-8.

48. *Where the usurers lent In His temple*: Matthew xxi., 12.

A View across the Roman Campagna. 14. *The Christ walks*: the picture fancied in the poem is of the Campagna as a sea, St. Peter's church as a ship is based upon the description of the fishing-boat on the Sea of Galilee, the marvellous catch of fish, Christ's walking upon the waters, Peter's discomfiture when he presumes to be as powerful, the meal on shore, as recorded in Matthew xiv., 24-33, Mark vi., 45-62, and especially in John xxi., 5-11, and vi., 22, following, the spirit of which are closely in accord with this poem.

33. *Haggling for pence with the other Ten*: the lost ten

tribes of Israel, and the tendency of Jewish and other majorities to care more for pence than social service, are the allusions here.

Line 36. *The triple crow of the Gallic cock* : an allusion to Peter's denial of Christ ere the cock crew thrice (see John xviii., 15-27), and to the failure of the Pope as the modern Peter to serve Italy loyally, and to his preferred waiting upon the foreign French troops, the bird emblem of France being the cock.

39. *Vultures! see, — as when Romulus gazed* : is a reference to the deed of Romulus in killing his brother when Rome was founded, and so, upon the inauguration of the city, summoning birds of prey to feast ; so the Pope, the poet implies, killed his Italian brothers at Mentana, when calling upon the French to prevent Italy from having any part in Rome as its capital, and again the vultures were feasted at a time which yet was destined to be the inauguration of a Roman capital.

The King's Gift. 1. *Teresita* : Teresita, Garibaldi's oldest daughter, and his two other children, Menotti and Ricciotti, as well as their mother, Anita, were his companions and comrades throughout the Italian incidents of the liberation, and vied with their father in their own way in heroic and devoted services to their country.

Parting Lovers. 30. *As blown through Sinai's bush* : "Even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God" (Psalms lxxviii., 8) ; "and the mount burned with fire" (Deuteronomy ix., 15) ; (see also Exodus iii., 1 and 2).

Mother and Poet is the true story of a patriot and poet, Laura Savio of Turin, one of whose sons was killed in the siege of Gaeta, the last stronghold of the Neapolitan government, which had been besieged from November, 1860, till it fell into the hands of the Italians, Jan. 15, 1861 ; the other son in the attack on the fortress of Ancona, which capitulated to the Italians Sept. 29, 1860.

Nature's Remorses. 1. *Her soul was bred by a throne* : the wife of Francis, King of Naples.

48. *That son of the Cursed* : Francis, King of Sicily and

Naples, son of King Ferdinand, whose despotism had caused all Italians to hate him.

Line 57. *Guizot's daughter*: Guizot, one of Napoleon's ministers, conservative in politics, played into the hands of the clerical party in the French court, and his daughter and many of the court ladies showed their sympathy with the Pope, and against Italian nationality.

The North and the South was written in honor of Hans Christian Andersen's visit to Rome in 1861.

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